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Radical Wholeness: Depth Psychological Healing in IKS

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Abstract

This paper explores the fundamental concepts and healing methods within Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), particularly as they relate to yoga and Upanishadic philosophy. As the ultimate aim of healing, it presents the idea of radical wholeness (svāsthyaň), a state of profound psychological, emotional, and spiritual integration. The paper explores the philosophical framework of IKS in four dimensions: ontology (the nature of being), epistemology (the methods of knowing), axiology (the value systems), and praxeology (the principles of right action). It draws on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Upanishads, and Ayurvedic thought. It challenges the shortcomings of Western scientific paradigms that reduce the psyche to quantifiable phenomena and suggests an all-encompassing model based on the inner journey of the self and caturdĕṣṭi (the four lenses of knowledge). The paper traces a clear path from a fragmented, afflicted mind (vyutthita citta) to an anchored, luminous state of wholeness, the tranquil mind (samāhita citta), using the story of Bỹgu and the five kośa-s (sheaths of being). Additionally, it describes the stages of Yogic practice, which culminate in transformative awareness and jīvanmukti (liberated living), from deep inner inquiry (antarāṅga sādhanā) to outer discipline (bahiraṅga sādhanā). The authors present Citta Vidyā, a contemporary synthesis that revitalises the therapeutic potential of IKS by fusing ideas from depth psychology, performing arts, and experiential processes. The paper invites a reorientation toward inner stillness, dharma, and conscious living, offering a compelling vision of human flourishing that goes beyond symptom reduction.

Keywords: Ontology, Epistemology, Caturdrsti, antarāṅga yoga

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Illness, Wellness and Radical Wholeness

Ayurveda defines health across four stages: firstly, when a person is ill and exhibits symptoms of illness, they are treated symptomatically - śamanaṃ. Secondly, the symptoms have subsided, but the person is not in a state of wellness. Ayurveda removes the lingering causes through śodhanaṃ - deep cleansing. It then progresses further to strengthen the immune system through practices called ārogyaṃ, aiming to prevent future illnesses. The fourth stage of wellness is called. svāsthyaṃ, which signifies wholeness and well-being resulting from an anchorage in ātman. We suggest the term "Radical Wholeness" as the English equivalent of svāsthyaṃ. The practices that promote ārogyaṃ and svāsthyaṃ include working with the psyche and often overlap with Yoga in many aspects.

Yogacharya Krishnamacharya defines a mature and healthy person as one who is anchored in inner stillness (śāmṭam) and responds to life's challenges appropriately, with the right rasa and the right intensity, and returns to śāmṭam when the need for action ends (Aurobindo, 1919; Ananthanarayanan, 2022; Desikachar, 1995). This is possible only when a person sees "what is as is" in the outer world and has inner mastery as illustrated by the following sutra.

> Sutra 1.41 णव°रिभजातÖयेव मणेहीतú हणषुतथतदजनता समापि ॥
> kṣīṇavṛtteḥ abhijātsyevamaṇeḥ grahītṛ grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatsthatadañjantā samāpatti
>
> With the weakening and ending of the fluctuations of the citta, it becomes like a very fine jewel, a polished stone that has the ability to reflect faithfully any object placed near it. The instruments that aid the process faithfully hold the impression of the object that is grasped and the puruṣa seizes the experience fully. The complete understanding that takes place is called samāpatti (complete experiencing). (Patanjali, 1983)

A "normal person" is far away from this self-mastery and wellness. From this inner state becomes the ground of one's being, one's buddhi (subtle mind) turns completely inward and rests in Puruṣa (transcendental consciousness) (Bateson, 1972). This definition of self-mastery and wellness leading to an anchorage in Puruṣa is identical to svāsthyaṃ.

The concept of health and wellness as currently understood falls short of this definition. It is often regarded as merely the absence of illness and physical vitality. Additionally, many practices labelled as "Yoga" are, at best, diluted and culturally appropriated versions of what Yoga truly encompasses. Yoga includes both internal transformative practices and external disciplines. Ethical behaviour is a fundamental aspect. Yogic practices can also guide a practitioner towards the direct realisation of Brahman. Consequently,

it seamlessly connects depth psychology with wellness. This paper aims to address some of the misconceptions surrounding Yoga and to present a more holistic approach to transformation than that offered by Western psychology. It assumes that the reader is familiar with the core principles of Indian thought and is not unfamiliar with samskṛta (Patañjali, 1983).

This paper analyses and integrates perspectives from Indic wisdom traditions, such as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, the Katha Upanishad, and the Taittireya Upanishad, to explore the philosophical foundations of radical wholeness- svāsthyaṃ. Indic systems argue that Consciousness is fundamental to existence and that all reality arises from Consciousness. The mind (manas) is the source of our external senses, which are only instruments that make the manifest visible. According to these systems, our senses are tools that reveal the manifest world, and consciousness is the foundation of all reality. Living joyfully and with deep inner freedom is the goal of healing in the Indic tradition. This includes both mental and physical health as well as the elimination of all traces, including vāsana (deep imprints) and samskāra (behavioral conditioning). The mind and body are not separated by yoga; these residues have psychological, emotional, and physical equivalents. Through yoga sādhanā, the inward gaze is directed toward self-awareness and the awakening of profound healing energies. Unlike modern science, which focuses on measurable phenomena, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) encompass multiple layers of reality, including the manifest, the unmanifest, and the knower. A sense of separateness is fostered by the division between the self and the other at the manifest level. The binary of "I" and "not I" is thus created. According to yogic theory, duḥkha (inner constriction) and illness are primarily caused by anchoring at this level of reality. In contrast to amana," which happens on a surface level, odhana necessitates lifestyle attention. Ārogyaṃ and svāsthyaṃ involve turning inward and dissolving residues. Yogic practices aim to facilitate anchoring at deeper levels of manifestation. Radical wholeness necessitates an acknowledgement of Indian ontology, epistemology, axiology, and praxeology.

This paper will focus on the Yogic view of healing that primarily involves psychological transformation. The first part of this paper examines the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and praxeology essential to understanding the Yogic practices necessary to arrive at svāsthyaṃ. The second outlines the essential Yogic practices that transform a person prone to illness into one who experiences radical wholeness.

Understanding Indian Knowledge Systems

Current view of Indic Philosophy

Let us begin by clearly stating the objections to Indic thought, regarded as a philosophy, or 'darshana,' rather than a verifiable science.

"It is evident that spirit philosophy is not a science since science is an objective logic, quantitative and verifiable system, where one has conclusive results via verification or falsification from observable or experimental phenomena. At the same time, a philosophy is only a subjective logic and qualitative system, where everyone has a unique thought or method to process anything. When a branch of philosophy becomes a branch of science, it separates from philosophy and develops into an independent discipline. It is correct that philosophy is the mother of science, but science could grow bigger and stronger than philosophy (Ye, 2022). We contend that scientific enquiry rooted in subtle inner spaces represents the way forward, not separation.

Let us explore the fundamental theme of the Upanishads and illustrate it through a story that questions the binary of Science versus Śāstra. The central question of the Upanishads is, "Who am I?" Yogacharya Krishnamacharya (1993) claims that the Upanishads examine the meaning of only one word, "aham" – I. We use this word in all our conversations countless times every day. We base our understanding of the world and others on how "I" respond to them. Yet, we do not truly grasp it. Understanding the nature and structure of the "I" is crucial for radical Wholeness (Dharampal, 2015).

A well-known story from the Tattiriya Upanishads begins with the son Bṛgu asking his father Vāruṇī, "What is Brahman?" His father replies, "The ground from which all manifestation and living beings arise, sustain themselves, and return to is Brahman. That is also you. Do a profound meditative enquiry into what that is." Bṛgu then contemplates this question and returns to say, "material reality (annamaya) is Brahman. It is a matter that is the ground from which all that is manifest arises, sustains, and goes back to." However, he realises that this answer is incomplete, so he asks the question again and receives the same instruction —"Do a profound meditative enquiry." Bṛgu returns with insights but soon recognises that each is incomplete—life energy (prāṇamaya), mind (manomaya), intellect (vijñānamaya), and finally bliss (ānandamaya). At this point, Bṛgu's questioning ceases. He is then offered some teaching and advice: by staying anchored in the ānandamaya, one becomes one with Brahman. However, he is also advised to hold all the levels of existence he has explored in great respect.

Elsewhere in the Taittiriya Upanishad, the method of contemplation at each level is explained: one examines one's material reality, which provides a clear understanding of the word "aham," i.e., the annamaya. One contemplates the fact that this level of identification and all of manifestation are identical. This realisation leads to vairāgya (disidentification) and viveka (discrimination). One then recognises that life energy (prāṇamaya) is more fundamental, and the same contemplation is directed at this level, with the

same realisation, until one rests in the blissful state (ānandamaya). The method of contemplation comprises four components: introspection, exploring subjectivity, seeking affirmation from an enlightened guru, and studying the consensus reached by the great seers regarding the nature of reality, the self, and Brahman. In other Upanishads, such as the Praśnopanishad, dialogue with other seekers is also part of the practice (Desikachar, 1995). By analysing the stages of this journey and the practices essential for this introspective process, one gains an understanding of radical Wholeness.

Examining Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology

We can see from several examples in the Upanishads and the well-known story of Gautama Buddha that Indic wisdom aligns with a value-driven approach, as it is deeply rooted in a persistent concern for human suffering. Intense practice, examining oneself and one's world to understand the roots of suffering and dissolving them, is not a selfish act but undertaken for the universal good. In contrast to purely objective or empirical endeavors, this orientation places a higher priority on truth-seeking, emphasizing self-realization, harmony, and collective well-being. On the other hand, profound inquiry that uncovers the invisible processes that underlie the tangible (avyakta) is also valued, as is knowledge about one's tangible world (vyakta). According to Patanjali (1983) and Bryant (2018), a profound comprehension of the material world, which is ever-changing and constrained by "cause-effect relationships," will not result in the realization of Brahman, the invariant and ultimately creative substratum of all existence. Because it focuses on analyzing subjective experiences, the valuing process, and the creation of meaning, an axiology-driven approach is especially well-suited for investigating the inner world of humans, including emotions, values, beliefs, and consciousness. By aligning these inner realities with transcendental values and goals, this approach supports individual experiences, highlights diversity, and aims to comprehend why these inner realities are important. It is particularly useful in fields like psychotherapy, counseling, and spiritual exploration where integrating values and personal development is crucial because it upholds ethical principles like respect, empathy, and care. Additionally, axiology enhances other philosophical fields, such as logic (structuring questions for clarity), ontology (examining the nature of the inner world), and epistemology (examining how knowledge of it is acquired). Although challenges like balancing subjectivity with scientific rigour and navigating diverse value systems exist, axiology's focus on meaning derived from experience provides a meaningful framework for understanding and integrating both the inner and outer worlds.

As mentioned earlier, IKS encompasses multiple layers of reality, whereas modern science focuses on measurable phenomena. The holistic approach of Indic thought, which embraces contradictions and transcends dualities

and the "first person" experience, becomes essential, and epistemology and ontology are derived from this foundation. In an axiology driven method of studying the inner world, ontology and epistemology are developed by operationalising axiology's values and ethical imperatives (Garg, 1996; Singh, 2021; 2022; Paranjpe, 2015; 2021; 2022).

Ontology defines categories and the relationships among those categories. Therefore, when an ontology dismisses the non-measurable by calling it unreal, it distances itself from much of the knowledge that arises from a deep exploration of the unknowable—experienced world. Epistemology based on such an ontology widens this gap and marginalises the knowledge found in Indic śāstra. To truly incorporate the Indic worldview, the term axiology might need to expand its meaning to include not only the study of the process of valuing but also the examination of the "kinds of things that are valuable".

To summarise, approaches such as introspection, meditation, empathetic listening, or phenomenological inquiry honour the subjectivity of the inner world while upholding ethical integrity. Knowledge is often pursued through multiple avenues, including direct experience (pratyakṣa), reasoning (anumāna), and trusted testimony (śabda), all of which reflect an alignment with core values. Together, axiology establishes the goals and priorities, ontology conceptualizes the field, and epistemology provides the means, guaranteeing that the study of the inner world continues to be significant, moral, and transformative.

The fundamental goal of our research into radical Wholeness is to enable a person to attain puruṣārtha, which is a dharmika (righteous) pursuit of artha (wealth) and kāma (desire) leading to mokṣa (total liberation from the cycles of life and death). An axiology-driven approach is consistent with this goal.

This paper suggests that the main objectives for radical wholeness and self-mastery should be dhāranā (contemplation) and dhyāna (meditation), which result in samādhi (absorption). These three techniques enable direct perception beyond words and categories, which rule the manomaya level (mind and thought) of existence, in addition to giving access to potent healing energies. Clear introspection and extrospection depend on this.

The Upanishadic Process

According to Taitireya Upanishad 3.6.1, "From joy, all beings are born; by joy, they are sustained, and into joy, they merge." Realizing the ultimate oneness of all manifestations leads to bliss (ānanda). One's perception of reality and quest for knowledge are shaped by the fundamental value of existence. The Upanishad highlights how ontology—what one believes exists—and

epistemology—how one seeks knowledge—are influenced by axiology, or the search for truth. According to Ananthanarayanan et al. (2022) and Bharata Muni (n.d.), Indic scriptures like the Taittiriya Upanishad emphasize a layered approach to learning, moving from the material (Annamaya Kosha) to ultimate truths (Brahmananda). This progression is transformative and experiential by nature. Western ontology and epistemology stem from a fundamental concept. "Thought creates divisions out of itself and then claims they naturally exist," says David Bohm (n.d.). For wholeness to emerge, this limited process of fragmentation must be overcome. He emphasizes the significance of incorporating values like wholeness and flow, going beyond fractured reasoning to acknowledge the interconnectedness of reality (ontology). David Bohm challenges us to keep in mind that reality is not divided by our thoughts. Logic can only suggest the deeper wholeness that exists beyond this disjointed thought. Bohm reflects the Upanishadic teaching that reason and logic are not ultimate truths, but rather instruments for guidance. He emphasizes direct experience and intuition, which is in line with Indic traditions.

Indic wisdom asserts that the world experienced through the senses, called the viśeṣa (discrete and differentiated) level of existence, leads to an identification with a sense of self that is fragmented. This is the root cause of duḥkha (inner constriction and suffering) and vyādhi (illness).

It is therefore crucial that we comprehend the Indic approach to learning and knowing and apply this understanding to healing. We will explore the concept of caturdṛṣṭi four and how the Yogic and Upanishadic processes implicitly follow it. We will then demonstrate the Yogic practices that assist us in moving from our "normal" state, which is filled with stress, duhkha (inner constriction and suffering), and vyādhi (illness), to svāsthyaṃ.

To understand a phenomenon comprehensively, one must examine any object (vyakta—gross or avyakta—subtle) from four perspectives — caturdṛṣṭi:

1. Bahir mukhaṃ- bahir dṛṣṭi: (The other – looking outward) The prevailing consensus among the sages regarding the phenomenon called śabda or āgama. Acquired through śaravaṇa — listening to the teachings of the sampradāya (lineage) to which one belongs.
2. Bahir mukhaṃ- antaḥ dṛṣṭi: (The other - looking in) Knowledge gained through experimentation, discernment, and enquiry - vijñāna. It is acquired through dialogue (saṃvāda) and apprenticeship with an expert (upaśikṣana).
3. Antaḥ mukhaṃ- bāhir dṛṣṭi: (Self looking outward) Subjective knowledge gained through observation (vicāraṇa) and reflection (manana).

4. Antaḥ mukhaṃ- antaḥ dṛṣṭi: (Self looking inward) Introspection, contemplation (dhāraṇā), and meditation (dhyāna) leading to a direct subtle perception of one's psyche and going beyond.

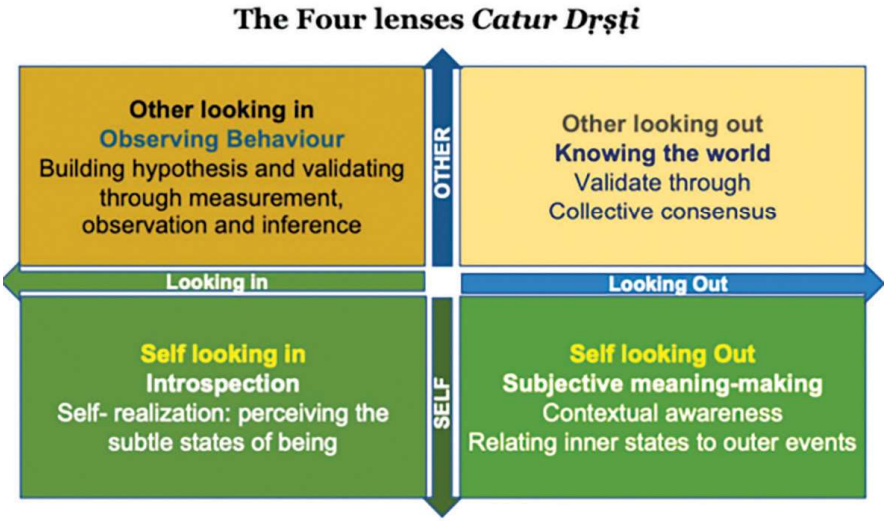

Figure 1: The four lenses - Catur Drsti

Applying the caturdṛṣṭi to knowing oneself

We must apply these four lenses to our pursuit of understanding the psychological domain. We will then expand ontology, epistemology, and axiology to include the three realms central to Yogic and Upanishadic enquiry, namely, the vyakta—the tangible, the avyakta—the intangible, and the Draṣṭṛ—the Seer. According to the Katha Upanishad, the senses serve four primary functions: Pratyakṣa sādhanaṃ (revealing the nature of reality through direct perception), Jīvana sādhanaṃ(supporting life and survival), Bhoga sādhanaṃ (enabling the experience of pleasure and enjoyment), and Yoga sādhanaṃ (facilitating inward focus and union with the higher self). The idea of Jīvana sādhanā developing into Bhoga sādhanā illustrates how human needs can spiral into attachment to worldly pleasures and pains, leading to greed and self-centeredness. It is a process of appreciating the surface-level and making decisions that prevent one from pursuing the truth. A person anchored in the viśeṣa (discrete and differentiated) level of manifestation follows this path. It causes vyādhi (illness) by intensifying duḥkha and entangling a person deeply in avidyā (erroneous knowing). One must follow the path of self-knowledge (svādhyāya) and inner discipline (tapas) in order to end duḥkha and promote healing. There is no essential distinction between humans and animals if a person stays entangled in the viśeṣa level, concentrating on basic needs and identifying with relationships. Deeper introspection and introspection define true humanity.

Yoga sādhana (dedicated yogic practice) facilitates parā vidyā (Brahmavidyā or transcendental wisdom), the fourth dimension (antaḥ-mukhāṃ - antaḥ dṛṣṭi: Self looking inward) discussed in caturdṛṣṭi. One can achieve profound healing energies and transcendental intelligence in this domain. The remaining three have to do with aparā vidyā (worldly knowledge), which is necessary and beneficial but not transformative. The development of viveka (discrimination) is the first step on the path to inward-focused yoga sādhana. The first step is to distinguish between an experience's internal reactions and its external triggers: "I am the cause of my suffering (duḥkha)." "How do I end this suffering?" In line with yoga sādhana, these thoughtful questions start a more profound, transformative investigation that results in radical wholeness. Even though it is essential, all external knowledge is categorized as aparā vidyā. It can be categorised into three layers:

Knowledge gained through sensory perception, called avidyā - understanding of the material world, or knowledge obtained through study. (bahir mukhaṃ- bahir dṛṣṭi: The other – looking outward)

- The knowledge that supports a dhārmika life stresses the ethical use of resources and one's faculties for needs rather than greed, fear, or desire. Using one's talents to invigorate oneself, one's surroundings, and one's world is also gained through personal apprenticeship with wise individuals. (bahir mukhaṃ- antaḥ dṛṣṭi: The other looking in)
- When one turns inward and contemplates in solitude, one begins to perceive the workings of one's mind directly. One recognises where one's desires, aversions, and fears originate. This leads to a deeper understanding of both outer and inner reality. One cultivates vairāgya (disidentification) and viveka (discernment). Introspection deepens into contemplation and meditation, which are the core of yoga sādhana. (antaḥ mukhaṃ
- bahir dṛṣṭi: Self looking outward and antaḥ ṃukhaṃ – antaḥ dṛṣṭi: Self looking inward)

Archetypal stories (e.g., Nachiketa's journey in the Katha Upanishad) emphasise values such as courage, surrender, and discernment, which serve as tools for navigating life's more profound questions of knowledge and existence. Jungian archetypes support the mythos by arguing that universal tales and symbols represent common ideals (axiology) that direct human comprehension (epistemology) and mold our identities (ontology).

Logic (logos) serves as a guide, while intuition and mythos (archetypal stories) open pathways to more profound truths. It recognises the layers of knowledge that exist. Still, it maintains that one must go beyond eros and pathos through mythos and into the layers of the psyche accessible only to

the courageous truth seeker who ventures into the depths of the unconscious and the unknown. It moves through the koṣas to harmonise axiology (bliss), epistemology (wisdom), and ontology (reality). It bridges the gap between the fragmentation of modern science and the holism of Indic wisdom by emphasising interconnectedness, value, and experiential knowing.

We will use the caturdṛṣṭi model to examine the Upanishadic approach in detail and relate it to Yogic practices in Part 2 of this paper.

Examining Science

It would be appropriate at this stage to understand how science has become central to popular thinking. The word 'scientist' only came into use in the mid-19th century. Back then, they were called natural philosophers, with Galileo being the first notable example. He was the first notable natural philosopher, whom we now refer to as a scientist. His approach was distinctive: he made meticulous observations, used technology, and developed hypotheses, testing them through experiments. Later, Charles Darwin followed, and based on his meticulous observations, he formulated the theory of natural selection and biological evolution, sparking a revolution in the life sciences.

Now, as we approach 1890, William James, one of the leading pioneers of modern psychology, published his monumental two-volume work, Principles of Psychology. He was part of the first generation of Western scientists of the mind and psychologists. Edward Titchener, Wilhelm Wundt, and William James were all contemporaries striving to achieve something that had never been accomplished in the West before: studying the science of the mind or soul outside of theology.

Herein lies a potential mistake. When it comes to the psyche, it is a mental phenomenon. Therefore, James's suggestion to adopt a radically empirical approach to cognitive phenomena, as was previously applied to physical and biological phenomena, was fundamentally flawed, as there is a catch. The issue is that psychological phenomena are not objective; they are subjective, not physical, and cannot be measured. They are qualitative. When observing something—your mind, thoughts, images, desires, and so forth—how can anyone else be sure you're truthful when you report it? Because it is a 'first-person' experience. When you are observing, it is not from a third person's perspective. William James offered progressive insights into the field of introspective psychology. When William James died, that entire movement of introspective psychology was effectively ended, much like a candle being snuffed out. It was replaced by behaviourism, not due to practical or empirical reasons, but because of ideological motives. These included the ideology of naturalism and the dogma of scientism. Simply put, naturalism is an ontological commitment to viewing the world as

fundamentally natural; it rejects the non-measurable as supernatural (James, n.d.; Rogers, 1951; Jung, 1959).

Furthermore, scientists concentrate on the nature and theory of the most effective methods for scientific inquiry. In other words, if you want to verify the truth of something, you should employ a scientific approach, as these methods have demonstrated their effectiveness over the past few centuries. According to them, everything else is simply subjective opinion, belief, speculation, or religious dogma. It is almost like a religious creed, similar to adhering to a single faith—there is only one way. Auguste Comte argues that science is the only way to understanding, especially regarding the human psyche or human nature, because science provides the only credible perspective of the world as a whole. This view has persisted for more than a century. He promoted positivism, a term that describes a way of studying society that relies specifically on scientific evidence, such as experiments and statistics, to reveal the true nature of societal functioning. This radically altered the medieval epistemological hierarchy, in which theology was regarded as the queen of the sciences, with logic and philosophy positioned beneath it. The Cartesian divide between matters of science and issues of theology sealed the split.

Comparing Science and Shāstra

What motivates inquiry in science? Science appears to limit itself to asking, “What is the ultimate nature of matter?” In contrast, Indic Shāstra asks: "How can one attain mukti(liberation), end duḥkha, and realise the true nature of Caitanya (pure consciousness), the ultimate subject?” Unlike science, Shāstra does not restrict its ontology or scope of inquiry. It explores both the vyakta (manifest) and avyakta (unmanifest), as well as the nature that examines objective reality but also prescribes dharma-aligned living to achieve puruṣārtha (the goals of life) and the cessation of duḥkha. In contrast, modern science often limits itself to the observable and measurable, especially after the Vienna Circle and Cartesian duality, where science deals with “what is” and religion focuses on “what ought to be.”

Yogic practices facilitate the initial perception of subjective reality through direct experience. These encounters fall under the category of the "experienceable unknown" (such as archetypal visions or intuitive insights). Some people may be able to pass through these layers and directly connect with Parabrahman, also known as the "un-experienceable unknown" or the absolute substratum. Similar to the svapna avasthā (dream state), these states are frequently described using metaphors to evoke a shared mythos (collective, archetypal understanding).

When spirituality is fully realized, it means living in the present without regrets, desires, or fears. Higher intelligence and enduring ethics can guide

actions in such a state. Although all people share these realms, language based on the objective world is unable to adequately convey them. One must go inward and transcend the domains of eros (enthusiasm), pathos (melancholy), and avidyā (incomplete or mistaken knowledge) in order to reach such subtle states.

Logos exists in the jāgrat avasthā (waking state), embodying the constructed, calculating mind that functions through the senses. However, as the Upanishads explain, the manas-indriya complex (mind-senses complex) cannot reach the deep states experienced at the furthest edges of the svapna avasthā (dream state) or suṣupti avasthā (deep sleep state), where the direct experience of Hiraṇyagarbha (the cosmic womb), Īśvara (the Creative Force), and Brahman are present.

Sharada Nandaram, in her inaugural lecture accepting the role of Professor of Business and Spirituality at Nyenrode Business Universiteit, entitled "Spirituality: the discipline for doing business with the unknown," delivered on 1 April 2022, guides us through the spectrum of known and unknown reality. Through her lecture, she bridges the gap between science and spirituality. The figure below illustrates the movement from aparā vidyā to parā vidyā that we have discussed so far in a comprehensive manner.

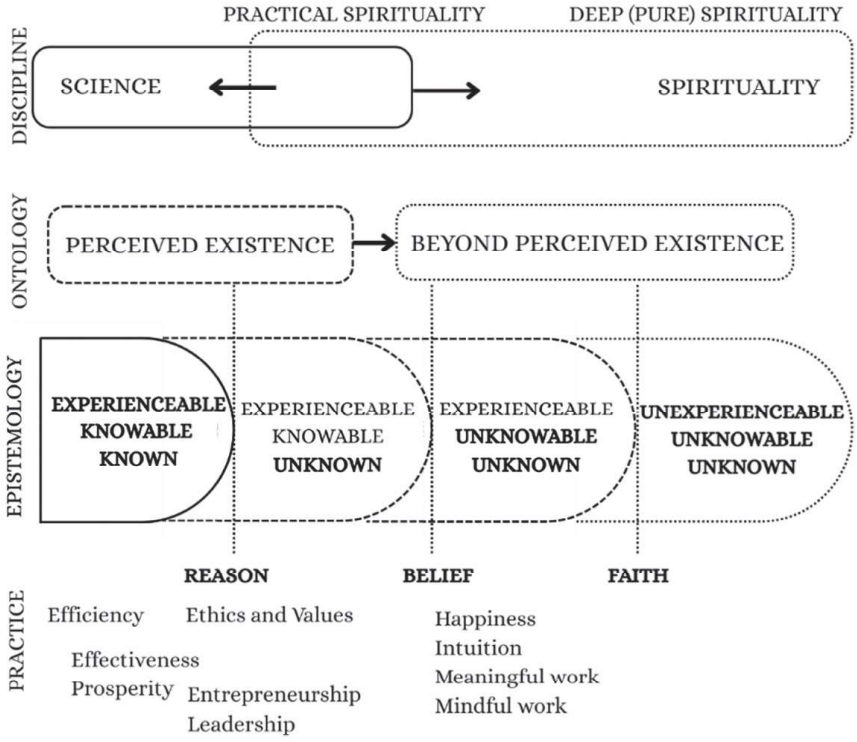

Figure 2: Spirituality as academic and practical discipline

In conclusion, our senses serve as tools to reveal reality but only lead to liberation when turned inward through yoga sādhana. While contemporary science focuses on quantifiable phenomena, IKS integrates several layers of reality (manifest, unmanifest, knower). Unlike English, which has an object-focused structure, Saṅskæta Sanskrit is a verb-based language that reflects the dynamic and experiential nature of reality. Shāstra explores both scientific and non-scientific domains, including intuitive, archetypal, and transcendental states.

The Yogic Practice for Radical Wholeness

Developing a Framework for Yogic Practice

A model of the inward journey is shown in Maheshwari's (2021) "V Theory" (see Figure 3). The V's downward slope represents how, beginning with a mind bound by conditioned beliefs, one progressively loosens and improves these inflexible ideas through continuous practice. When the brain achieves a state of coherence during meditation, profound truths emerge at the bottom of the V, penetrating deeper levels until a profound sense of oneness is felt. One's fundamental paradigms change as they ascend the V because they acquire transformative insights that enable them to view reality from a radically different angle.

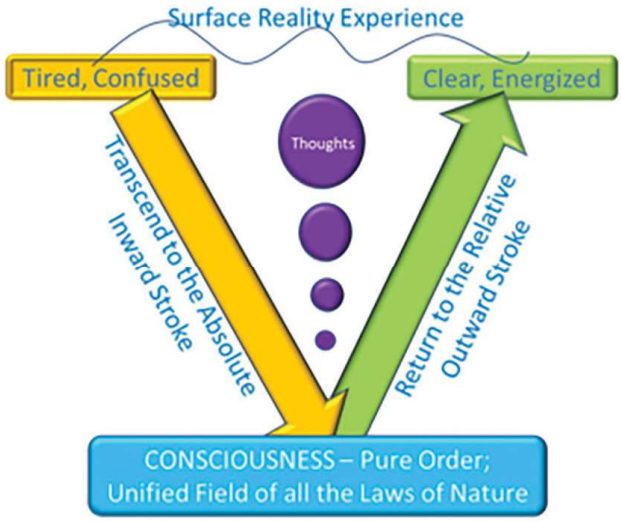

Figure 3: V-theory by Maheshwari (2021)

Four spheres of existence are guided by the "V" process:

i. The common, unquestioned way of seeing the world is represented by the Entropic field (Avidyā Kṣetraň). The outside world is full of things and people that are seen as different from oneself. The only reality seems to be the world as perceived. Fear, anger, disgust, and distraction

predominate in an individual's inner state, which is marked by a sense of separation.

ii. When one starts investigating subtle, intangible states of being and challenges the reality experienced through the senses, the Enlivening Field (Dharma Kṣetraň) becomes apparent. An awareness of profound interconnectedness and interdependence replaces the perceived uniqueness and distinctiveness of things and people. One's inner state is shaped by love, compassion, and joyful learning repose within this realm of Śāṃtam.

iii. When meditating deeply, one can access the Coherent field (Dhyāna Kṣetraň). A deep sense of existential unity results from the interconnectedness. At the same time, perception improves and one's sense of self vanishes. A person's inner world is one of tranquillity, peace, and tranquillity, and it is marked by stillness. In this case, equanimity enables the identification of all liminal emotions, allowing them to emerge when necessary and subside when not. Within this domain of Śāḍtam, all rasa-s (emotional qualia) are at rest.

iv. When one stays in meditative witnessing, the field of Satcitānanda Kṣetraň grows. It is a divine gift that anchors the seeker in ecstasy, silence, and oneness, marked by transcendental bliss.

Through regular practice, deeper states of experience serve as the basis for interactions with the outside world.

This does not mean that the less subtle realms disappear; rather, they become more accessible. It suggests that one engages with the world from a more holistic and less individualistic or possessive perspective. Perception of oneself and the world becomes clearer, free from emotional reactions, distortions, or projections. Compassion deepens, self-centredness diminishes, and one works for the well-being of both oneself and the world

Illustrating the Catur Dṛṣṭi framework through the story of Bṛ̍gu

We revisit the Catur Dṛṣṭi lens to explore the process of profound transformation, delve into the subtle dimensions of the self, and establish a foundation in Consciousness/Brahman. To recap the four lenses: 1. Others' Perspective Outwards: Engaging in discussions and dialogues with wise individuals to internalise a deeply researched understanding of the world. 2. Others' inward view: Observing, enquiring into, and analysing the workings of both gross and subtle objects, living and non-living. Listening to the opinions of wise people one trusts about oneself. 3. Self-View Outwards: Subjective meaning-making through engaging with and observing the world and other people. 4. Self-Reflection: Introspection and subtle awareness of the workings of one's psyche. Meditative enquiry seeking direct perception

of the ground of one's Being. The Taittiriya Upanishad narrates Bṛ̇gu's journey guided by his father Vāruṇī. Bṛ̇gu searches for truth and a way to end suffering. Vāruṇī encourages him to contemplate the nature of Brahman—the sustainer of the Universe and all life. Bṛ̇gu meditatively explores Brahman's essence. At each stage, he seeks affirmation from Vāruṇī, who invites more profound reflection. Bṛ̇gu gradually identifies Brahman as matter, life force, mind, wisdom, and bliss. In the end, he realizes that Brahman is all of these and more, leading to a state of liberation and unity (jīvanmukta). After that, Brgu learns that everything about Brahman—from matter to bliss—is priceless. At every stage of life, he comes to understand the connection between the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of the self. In the end, this deep meditation helps Bügėgu ground himself in Brahman as consciousness by releasing him from the desires, aversions, and fears that define each layer of Brahman's manifestation (which is not transcendent). He understands that Brahman and his "self" are one.

A change, an evolution of awareness from the tangible to consciousness, can be seen in Bågu's journey: from recognising the gross physical world to realising the subtle coherence of all existence. From the Entropic field to the Enlivening and Coherent fields to the Sādhana Field, from seeing the "self" as a fractured entity to feeling Oneness and acting with transcendental intelligence. This journey can be metaphorically represented as a cone, where the base represents the infinite Oneness of Consciousness and the apex represents limited, conditioned existence. The cone's capacity to "transcend and include" grows as one delves deeper into the "V" process. The Taittiriya Upanishad's teachings demonstrate the close relationship between the ontology, praxeology, axiology, and epistemology that form the foundation of IKS.

These disciplines demonstrate how spiritual grounding fosters well-being and dhārmic action at every level of existence.

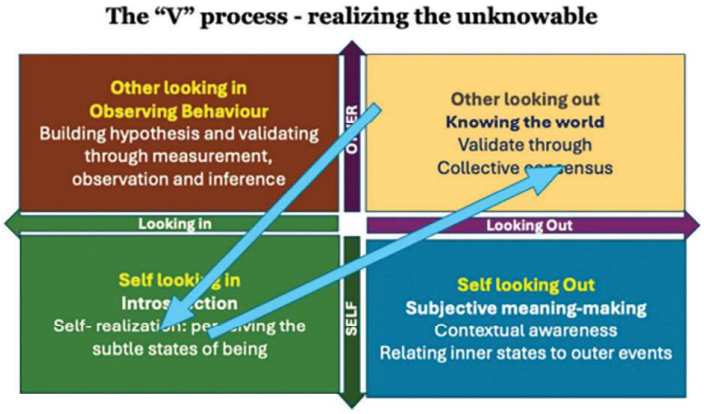

Figure 4: The "V" Process illustrated by story of Brigu

We now examine the steps Bṛgu takes to decode the story as we guide you through the yogic practices that enable a person to traverse the five kośa-s to attain the state of ānanda — bliss — and svāsthyaṃ — radical wholeness.

What is illness?

Before we explore the practices that foster svāsthyaṃ (radical wholeness), let us consider what the Yoga Sutras say about disease. Sutra 30 of the first chapter of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra (PYS) describes the progressive stages from illness to wellness. It clearly indicates that these are the outer symptoms of a psyche that is disturbed — vyutthita citta (Desikachar, 1995, 2003, 2011) This is a psyche caught in the grip of avidyā, mistaken perception. Avidyā suggests an inability to perceive the true nature of time, phenomena, self, and life accurately.

> Sutra 2.5 अनयाशुचदःखानामसुॅनयशुचसुखामयाॅतस्वाᳫया ॥ ५ ॥
> anitya- aśuci - duḥ kha - anātmasunitya-śuci-sukha-ātma- khyātiḥ -avidyā; Erroneous perception is the state wherein the transient and the permanent; the impure and pure; distress and happiness, self and non-self are wrongly apprehended. (Patanjali, 1983)

A psyche acting from avidyā projects meanings derived from the past or its compulsions, distorting perception. In the context of the Upanishadic journey, a psyche in avidyā cannot hear the words of the teacher (śravaṇaṃ) clearly; it interprets what it hears as meanings that are old and familiar.

> ÓयाधयानसंशयमादालयावरिततदशनालधभूमकवानविÖथतवान चतिवपातेतरायाः ।। ३० ।।
> vyādhi-styāna-saṃśaya-pramāda-ālasya-avirati-bhrānti-darśanaalabdhabhūmikatva-anavasthitatvāni citta-vikṣepāḥ te-antarāyāḥ (Patanjali, 1983)

In the practice of yoga, the sādhaka (practitioner) often faces blocks and obstacles. These can include illness, inertia, doubt, carelessness, fatigue, overexcitement, wrong perception, difficulty in establishing a foundation, or the inability to find the self on solid ground.

vyādhi: Disease, illness; ādhiḥ mānasa vyathā (illness is due to anguish in the mind).

styāna: Inertia to practice, giving up before you start, heaviness, difficulty in beginning.

saṃśaya: Doubt, hesitation, oscillating between two options, never beginning (ubhaya koti spṛhā), destroying that which offers support (āśraya bhukta).

pramāda: Carelessness, overconfidence, lack of mindfulness, inability to focus (anavadhānatā).

ālasya: A feeling of fatigue, futility, laziness, depression, apathy, indolence, and mental or physical sluggishness; feeling stuck (las śleśaṇa).

avirati: The opposite of ālasya, characterised by excessive excitement, hyperactivity, restlessness, intemperance, excessive sensuality, and breaking the boundaries of appropriate behaviour (śaṣṭrokta niyama ullanghanam).

bhrāntidarśana: Self-delusion, slip of judgment, unjustified feeling of superiority or inferiority.

alabdhabhūmikatva: Inability to reach a new stage, unable to establish a foundation. anavasthitatvāni: Able to create a ground but unable to locate the self within it, the impossibility of remaining at the same level, instability ('stha tiṣṭhatha' = 'avasthā' = anchored in a stable ground, 'anavasthā' = the state not reached).

citta: Of the spirit, of the psyche.

vikṣepāḥ: Dispersion, distraction, projecting ('kṣip' = to throw).

antarāyāḥ: Blocks, obstacles.

It can be observed from this sutra that yoga progresses through stages of health similar to Ayurveda and regards avasthā (being anchored in a stable ground) as the primary aim of yoga sadhana (Bryant, 2018; Swami Hariharananda, 1983; Ananthanarayanan et al., 2022). The Yoga Sutras begin with a declaration—Now begins the practice of yoga! The meaning of the word anuśāsanam is: discipline to follow, instruction or precept to adhere to, and to remain committed to what one has discovered. Yogacharya Krishnamacharya (1996) has emphasised that one needs an adhikāra – a readiness to advance to PYS. The first sutra sets the tone for the profound teachings that follow, where the teacher evaluates the seeker's ability to listen (śravaṇam), reflect and contemplate (mananam), and discover and adhere to the insights (nidhidhyāsanam). In the discussion that follows, it will become clear that the inner journey to reaching the stable ground of śāṃtam not only involves progressing from illness to wellness but also is essential for attaining radical wholeness and anchoring in Brahman-consciousness. Samāhita citta, the prerequisite for achieving dhyāna, or profound states of meditation, is a manifestation of the inner ground of Śāātam.

Practices in Preparation for Deep Yogic Work

A young brahmachari's journey begins in the serene rhythms of a Gurukula tucked away in the countryside—not with lofty questions or esoteric texts,

but with preparation and alertness. His presence is noted before he can ask a question or gain the right to ask, "What is Brahman?" The instructor silently evaluates his sincerity, receptivity, health, and discipline. A dedicated and disciplined lifestyle that includes dinacaryā (healthy eating habits, āsana, prāṇāyāma, chanting of mantras, and study), good conduct, including an attitude toward oneself and others, is evaluated by the teacher. Can he assimilate the lessons and maintain his health to share them with the world? Because knowledge in the Indic tradition is a sacred transmission rather than just information, the student needs to be ready. The student is selected by the teacher, not the other way around (Malhotra, 2010).

Living in the Gurukula, where the brahmachari adopt a disciplined lifestyle, is the first stage. This is about fostering the foundation of adhikāra—the inner readiness to receive knowledge—rather than just being obedient. Bahiraṅga sādhanā means "outer-limb practices" in Sanskrit. Yama (behavioral ethics), Niyama (intra-personal discipline), Āsana (postures), and Prāṇāyāma (breath regulation) are the first four limbs of Patanjali's Aṣṭāngā Yoga (the eight limbs of yoga). These bahiraṅga sādhanāensure basic physical health, psychological stability, and social responsibility.

1. Daily Routine: Rising before dawn, bathing, attending to rituals, serving in the kitchen, taking care of the space and the Guru. Life is simple, rhythmic, and intentional.
2. Physical Practices: A daily regime of āsana (physical postures) and prāṇāyāma(breath regulation) to build a healthy body and calm mind. Āsana refers to the physical postures practised in yoga, which aim to improve physical health, stability, and flexibility, preparing the body for deeper practices.
3. Mental Discipline: Basic scriptural chanting, mantra practice, and the start of inward reflection. At this stage, the chanting concentrates solely on correct pronunciation and listening skills. The vibration of the words has a healing effect.

It is worth noting that what is now understood by the term 'Yoga' does not extend much beyond this. Herbert Benson's main arguments in his book “The Relaxation Response (1975) Focus on the idea that the body has a natural, inherent mechanism to counteract the harmful physiological effects of stress. "one" or "calm"), maintaining a passive attitude towards distracting thoughts, and practising regularly (typically 10-20 minutes twice daily) reduces heart rate, lowers metabolism, slows breathing, and relaxes muscles, thereby reversing the damaging effects of stress on the body. Benson also claims that various meditative and relaxation practices, such as Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, and Zen, produce similar physiological changes. What Benson examines is a superficial level of these practices.

Although there are clear advantages, they do not prepare a person for the profound journey that comes with focusing on radical wholeness, or mukti (total liberation). According to Ayurveda, these are methods that guarantee the ɑodhana level, a fundamental state of well-being. An essential component of the preparations is the ethical underpinnings. It was crucial in the Gurukula mode of lineage teaching that knowledge be applied only in dhārmika (righteous and virtuous) ways. Yama and niyama are the fundamental practices.

1. Ethical Foundations: The practices of yama (ethical behavior) include chastity (brahmacārya), noncovetousness (aparigraha), truthfulness (satya), non-stealing (asteya), and non-violence (ahi."
2. Personal Observations: Niyama emphasises intra-personal discipline, including self-discipline (tapas), contentment (santoṣa), cleanliness (śauca), deep study (svādhyāya), and surrender (īśvarapraṇidhāna).

The later stages of yoga, which entail deeper introspection and spiritual realisation (antaraṅga sādhanā), are prepared for by these external practices. Yogic practices lose their dhārmika (virtuous) essence and become misappropriated without a foundation in ethics and discipline. Yoga is frequently reduced to a collection of "secular practices" for aesthetic and stress-relieving reasons.

As discussed earlier (in part 1), this arises from the Euro-American history of opposition between the "scientific" and the "religious," a binary that has no place in yogic practice. Essentially, bahiraṅga sādhanā is the initial stage of the yogic path, where practitioners establish a strong physical and ethical base before progressing to more advanced, inward-focused practices. This foundation is crucial because the inner work of cleansing one's conditioning includes what is now commonly referred to as "shadow work."

Through internalising these practices, the seeker has moved beyond vyādhi (illness), styāna (inertia), and saṃśaya (doubt). The person experiences the positive outcomes of śodhana. The seeker has taken full responsibility for their life and has turned their back on avidyā kṣetraṃ.

Step One: Earning the Right to Ask (Adhikāra for Inquiry)

Once the śiṣya has internalised discipline and embodied respect, the teacher grants him space to ask deeper questions; he becomes a true brahmacārin—one who is in pursuit of Brahman. In the story of Bṛgu, he approaches his father to ask Vāruṇī.

- What is the purpose of life?
- What is the nature of the universe?
- Who am I truly? This is a sacred moment.

The teacher tells him what the elder sages have said so far – "satyam jñānaṃ anantham Bṛhama Brahman is Truth, Absolute Knowledge and Eternity. However, hearing these words does not mean realising what they mean. Learn how to meditate and reach sāmādhi so that you have a direct comprehension of the transcendent Truth.

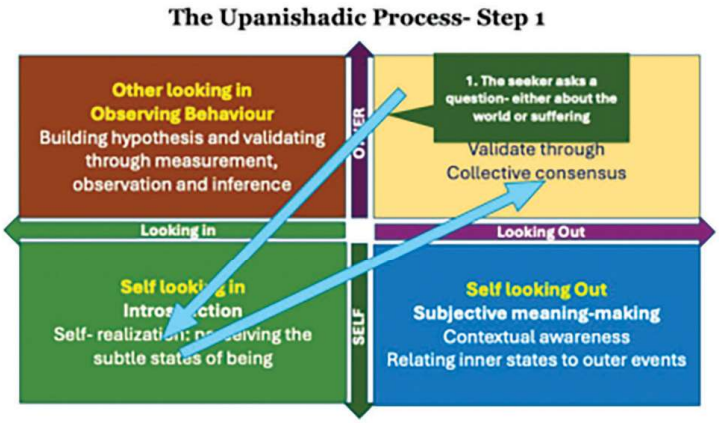

Figure 5: Inner quest begins

Step Two: Meditation and Reflection (Antaraṅga Sādhanā)

This is when Bṛgu is ready, and when asked by his teacher, "atha yoga anushāsanam?" he answers with conviction, "yes!" In crossing this threshold, Bṛgu is truly committing to a lifelong sādhana (practice). One should awaken oneself to the seriousness of the practice by asking, "Do I have a burning desire to end duḥkha for myself and others? Do I have a yearning to quest for truth?"

> Now begins Antaraṅga Sādhana—the inner work. This stage starts with pratyāhāra.
>
> Sutra 2.54 स्वविषयासंप्रयोगे चितस्वरूपानुकार इवेन्द्रियाणां प्रत्याहारः ।। ५४ ।। sva-viṣaya -asamprayoge cittasya svarūpa - anukāra iva indriyāṇām pratyāhāraḥ; All the faculties (sense organs) are drawn within thereby allowing the psyche to regain its pristine form. (Patanjali, 1983)

The practices learnt in the initial preparatory stage are now used for self-reflection. Āsana and prāṇāyāma practices are not merely about performing postures for physical health. They become a lens through which one observes where the saṃskāra—habitual patterns of the body arising from vāsana—deep impressions reside. In Yogic thought, the psyche and soma are not two separate entities. The body is the receptacle where psychological hurts and cravings reside. The flow of prāṇa—life energies—becomes blocked. These blocks are called granthi—knots.

They are also known as varma points, similar to acupressure points. When prāṇa flows through the granthi, the following negative consequences occur.

> Sutra 2.3 अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः क्लेशाः ।। ३ ।। avidyā̄-asmitā̄-rā̄ga- dveṣa -abhiniveshā̄ḥ kleshā̄ḥ; Erroneous perception, self-constructs, pleasure seeking, avoidance of pain and reinforcing one's sense of self out of fear and insecurity are the causes of pain and distress. (Patanjali, 1983)

1. One's perception is clouded. The meaning one gives to time, the objective world, and one's experiences and of life are distorted and erroneous. This is avidyā.
2. Based on these meanings, one constructs a sense of self. One assumes that this self is enduring- asmitā.
3. One assumes that pleasurable experiences will keep repeating and craving takes root- rāga. One assumes that painful experiences will recur and aversion takes root —dveṣa.
4. A fear of death gets triggered when the constructed sense of self is threatenedabhinivesa.

In Yogic thought, these are the states of the psyche-soma complex. This foundation of being is called avidyā kṣetraṃ. The saṃskāra (conditioned patterns), vāśanā (deep imprints), and granthi define this foundation of being. The mind is disturbed—vyutthita citta. The reader will recall our discussion on illness, that all disease originates from this ground. Pratyāhāra is the careful observation of where these processes arise from and how one feeds the avidyā kṣetraṃ. The practice of withdrawing energies from the avidyā kṣetram enables the psyche to detach from external triggers. One gathers one's energies back to oneself. The movement towards becoming a samāhita citta—a quiet and still mind—begins.

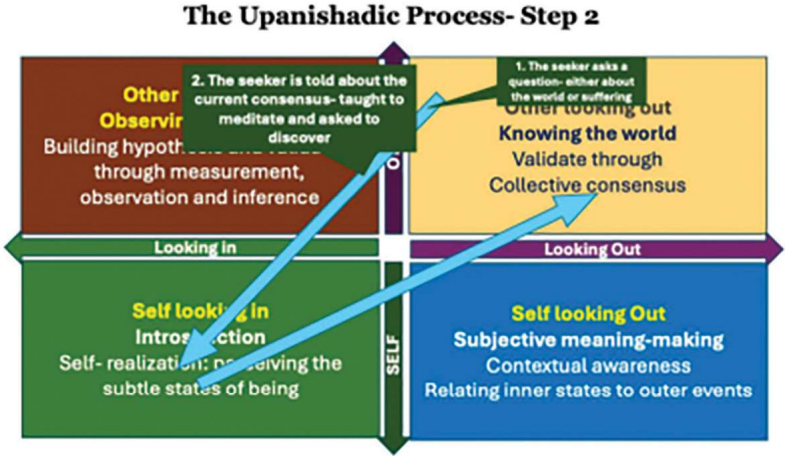

Figure 6: Internalising the practices

Step Three: Srāvaṇa and Manana

Careful listening and deep reflection characterise this step. At this stage, the seeker engages in a cyclical process: they practise, reflect inwardly, and return to the teacher with new insights or questions. The learning is dialogic, experiential, and recursive (Ananthanarayanan et al., 2025).

It begins with inviting a commitment to the single-pointed effort—ekatatva-abhyāsa. To demonstrate how the deep practice of chanting can initiate the sravaṇa-manana cycle, let us examine Sutra 27 and 28 of Chapter 1 of PYS 11. Sutra 27 states that OM is the word representing Puruṣa, the Transcendent Consciousness (Balasubramanian, 2020). This reflects the Mandukya Upanishad. The Mandukya Upanishad is concise yet profound, containing only 12 verses. Its primary focus is on the nature of the Self (ātman) and ultimate reality (Brahman) through the symbolism of the sacred syllable AUM_. It encourages the practitioner to contemplate the universe symbolised by each syllable.

> Sutra 1 27 तय वाचकःणवः ।। २७ ।। tasya vācakaḥ praṇ avaḥ ; The word that denotes Brahman is AUM_;Sutra 1.28 तॉजपतदथभवनम ।। २८ ।। tad-japaḥ tad-artha- bhāvanam; While chanting AUM_ meditate on its meaning. (Patanjali, 1983)

- "A": Waking consciousness (Jāgrat) – awareness of the external world perceived through the senses; The Entropic field (Avidyā Kṣetraṃ)
- "U": Dream Consciousness (Svapna) – the inner mental world of images; The Enlivening Field (Dharma Kṣetraṃ)
- "M": Deep Sleep Consciousness (Suṣupti) – undifferentiated, pure unawareness; The Coherent field (Dhyāna Kṣetraṃ)
- "_" the silent note: (Turīya) – Beyond and underlying the other three states, transcending all dualities and mental activity – Brahman; The Sādhana field (Satcitānanda Kṣetraṃ) The chanting of AUM_, followed by the contemplation as recommended by PYS, elevates one far beyond the "relaxation response". By listening to the sound as its vibrations originate from the perineum and resonate through to the mouth during exhalation, one can sense the flow of prāṇa. The exhale is then followed by a slow inhale, attentively observing the movement of prāṇa back to the perineum. When prolonged, attentive chanting is followed by a period of silence and minimal breathing, it opens access to dream states and deep sleep states within the consciousness. Subtle sensations resulting from saṅskāra and vāsanā become apparent. This is an example of a process that moves from surface-level health benefits to profound purification (pratyahara). The Upanishad also suggests a technique called upāsanā, or contemplation, in which one stays rooted in each universe by chanting just that syllable for long stretches of time and reflectively noting how the nature of the universe and oneself are the same. Bågu investigates

> the subtle sheaths—kōśa-s—through such practices. Vāruṇī tenderly leads him to become conscious of the pañca kōśas, or the five sheaths covering the self, starting with the gross annamaya and moving on to the subtle prāṇamaya (energetic sheath), manomaya (mental sheath), and vijñānamaya (pure mind sheath). It is a lovely process of introspection that promotes comprehension and a deeper sense of connection.

Brgu shares his newfound understanding with his father at each stage. Vāruṇī pays close attention while teaching Bågu ever-more-effective techniques that advance the inner journey. Pratyāhāra paves the way for dhāraṇā, where the mind, liberated from outside stimuli, collects its energy and focuses it on a particular inquiry. This entails shifting from a thorough examination of one kōśa to the next in Bõgu's case. Additionally, it is important to pay attention to the saṅskāra and vāsanā as they emerge because, unless totally eliminated, they are likely to resurface at the appropriate time. Sustained dhāraṇā, awareness of saṅskāra and vāsanā if they arise, focusing attention on them, dissolving and de-potentiating them, and other more subtle states are made possible by this cycle.

A recurrent theme in many of the PYS-recommended practices is the progression into the more subtle levels of being, as demonstrated by how AUM_ changes from a simple sound to be repeated into a contemplative path. We brought up the four sentient fields when we talked about the "V" process. It becomes clear that the process of chanting AUM_ and delving into its deeper meaning involves moving one's attention from the avidyā kṣetraň, the universe of "A," to the dharma kṣetraň, the universe of "U." The universe of "M," the dhyāna kṣetraň, finally realizes and rests in the Silence of Turīya. The transition of AUM from a simple sound to a reflective state exemplifies the process of entering the more subdued levels of being.

When one deviates from the suggested ethical standards and becomes aware of one's boundaries, Yama becomes an antaraṅga sādhana. For instance, Ahimsā develops into a perceptive understanding of one's own and other people's boundaries. We commit himsā, or violence against ourselves or others, when we do not respect either. This realisation is not an invitation to guilt, but a prompt to ask, “In doing what I was doing, what was I really doing?” This question leads to an inner search for the triggers — the saṁskāra-vaśanā complex that generates self-centred behaviours. This is when the subtle aspects of niyama begin to make sense. For instance, śauca is not just outer cleanliness, but a process of doing dhāranā—contemplating and observing the process by which the seeds of avidyā sprout and grow, creating knots (granthi). Dhāranā opens access to the deep-cleansing and healing intelligence that lies hidden in the dhyāna kṣetram.

Another powerful idea we encounter in PYS is the concept of accessing the universe of svapna, or the realm of dream consciousness. Several processes are recommended that utilise the arts. The dance tradition is rich with practices that enable one to become aware of rasa—emotional qualia.

> Sutra 1.38 स्वप्ननिद्राज्ञानालम्बनं वा ।। ३८ ।। svapna nidrā jñāna ālambanam vā; Examining and understanding the phenomena of sleep, deep sleep and dreams and bringing these states of mind to consciousness can also help in enhancing our understanding of ourselves. (Patanjali, 1983)

By practising dhāraṇā on the process through which being rooted in a rasa called sthāyī bhāva generates subpersonalities. For instance, bhayānaka—fear as a sthāyībhāva produces the Victim. Each of the eight rasas gives rise to its own distinct subpersonality. These are archetypal since the rasas are universal. When these manifest, they give rise to avidyā. Anchoring oneself in śāṃtam—silence and stillness—enables one to sustain dhāraṇā and observe the inner drama unfold. This observation not only offers insight into one's behavioural patterns and compulsions, i.e., the saṃskāra—vāsana complex, but also opens channels to healing intelligences.

Music and art can serve similar purposes. Performing the stories from the Epics — the Mahabharata and Ramayana — in the manner of traditional Indian theatre, with masks, heightened emotions, and expressive movements, also helps one connect with the rasa and the inner drama. Abhinavagupta made pioneering contributions to the theory of rasa and dance in Indian aesthetics, particularly through his commentary "Abhinavabharati" on Bharata's "Nāṭyaśāstra". By adding a ninth rasa, śāṃ tam (quietude or tranquility), which he regarded as analogous to Shiva. This addition marked a significant development, linking aesthetic experience to spiritual bliss and ultimate liberation- mokṣa. He also spoke at length about the transformative power of śāṃ tam (Mahabharata, n.d.; Arora & Ananthanarayanan, 2022; Radhakrishnan, 1948).

Achieving step two means that the person has internalised practices that eliminate pramāda (carelessness), ālasya (fatigue), avirati (restlessness), and bhrāntidarśana (selfdelusion). The individual is now in ārogya and rooted in dharma kṣetraṃ.

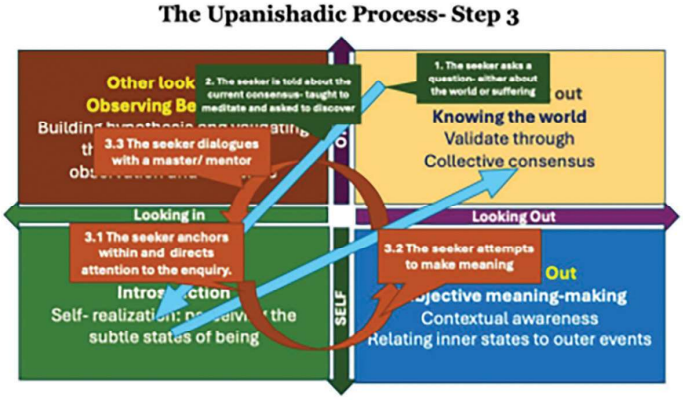

Figure 7: Introspection, Discovery and Dialogue

Step Four: Discerning the Real (Viveka and Vairāgya)

As inner clarity grows, the student cultivates viveka (discernment) and vairāgya(dispassion). Avidyā khyāti- knowing arising out of the ground of avidyā is entirely replaced by viveka khyāti- knowing arising from a crystal clear mind:

- Observing the Transient: Recognising the impermanence of phenomena, including thoughts, feelings, and identifications.
- Letting Go: A gradual loosening of attachments—first to sensory pleasures, aversions, and fears, and ultimately to the sense of identity itself.
- Cultivating stillness: The meditative state deepens, becoming a state of being.

Abhinavagupta provided a psychological analysis of rasa, defining it as the bliss of the self (ātman) masked and coloured by rasa and emotion. This is very similar to the theory enunciated in PYS. Abhinavagupta emphasised the resonant identification between the spectator and the actors, ādhāraṇ īkaraṇ ā. This resonance is dhāraṇā.

As the saṃskāra and vāśanā dissolve, the sense of self also disappears, allowing one to engage in dhyāna—deep meditative enquiry. All the seeds of self are eliminated, and saṃskāra and vāśanā are fully eradicated. The mind then gently shifts into the state of samādhi—total absorption. There is complete harmony with the process of enquiry (both subtle and gross), and the mind unites with the emergence and manifestation of phenomena as it is created from Prakṛti until Prakṛti reabsorbs it. When Bṛgu attains this realisation, he experiences blissānanda. He returns to his father, Vāruṇī, and states that brahman is ānandamaya and the substratum of all existence.

With this, the seeker has transcended alabdhabhūmikatva (the inability to reach a new stage) and anavasthitatva (the inability to remain anchored). The seeker has discovered svāsthyaṃ — radical wholeness — and is anchored in the Dhyāna Kṣetraṃ.

Step Five: The Returning (From Knowing to Being)

Bṛgu, who began his journey as a brahmachari, now returns to the world as a realised sage — a brahmavādin — one who speaks about the Brahman having had a direct perception. At this stage, practices turn into natural expressions of inner stillness. Action is in harmony with dharma, thought is grounded in śraddhā (steadfastness), and the student becomes a knower — not just in theory but in being. This is a phase of nidhidhyāsana. The seeker is now a jivanmukta—a totally liberated being, anchored in the Satcitananda Ksetram. Bṛgu lives the life of a liberated person- jīvanmukta. He becomes the next preceptor.

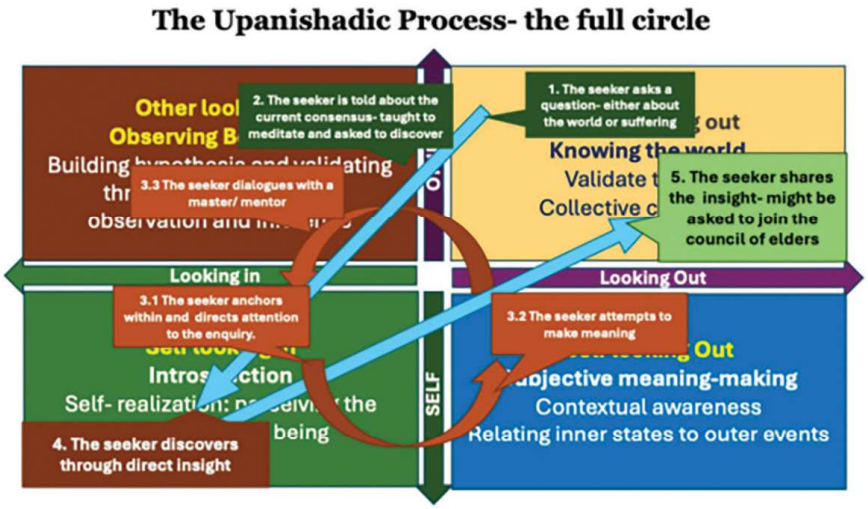

Figure 8: The quest ends

Comparison with Western Ideas on Learning and Wholeness

The concept of radical wholeness (svāsthyaṃ), as described in the paper, diverges fundamentally from the Western paradigm of wellness and learning. In Western psychology, learning is primarily epistemic—a process of acquiring knowledge and restructuring cognition. In contrast, the Indic model presented here is ontological and axiological—a process of transforming the very ground of being and aligning with dharma.

A. Western Approaches to Learning and Wholeness

Humanistic Psychology (Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow): Sees learning as self-actualisation and growth toward potential. However, it often remains within the psychological ego's framework, focusing on self-fulfilment rather than transcendence.

Depth Psychology (C.G. Jung): Aligns partially with Indic thought through its attention to archetypes, the unconscious, and individuation. Yet it treats the psyche as autonomous, not as an expression of universal consciousness (Puruṣa).

Cognitive-Behavioural and Neuropsychological Models: Emphasise measurable change in thought or neural patterning, often overlooking the ethical, contemplative, and value-oriented dimensions.

Ken Wilber's Integral Psychology and Varela's Enactive Cognition: Move closer to Indian insights by emphasising interconnectedness, embodiment, and the unity of knower and known, but they remain conceptually derived rather than experientially grounded in sadhana (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991; Wilber, 2000).

B. Indic Approach to Learning and Wholeness

- Learning (adhigama) in IKS is transformation (pariṇāma) through śravaṇa–manana–nididhyāsana (listening, reflection, meditation).
- Wholeness (svāsthyaṃ) is the dissolution of inner fragmentation (vyutthita citta) into tranquillity (samāhita citta).
- Knowledge is not about accumulation but about seeing clearly ("yathābhūtadarśana"), dissolving ignorance (avidyā).
- True learning culminates in liberation (mokṣa)—a radical shift from duality to unity, echoing Bohm's "unbroken wholeness." Hence, while Western theories emphasise cognition and adaptation, the Indic paradigm emphasises insight and transformation of consciousness.

This paper bridges these through Citta Vidyā, which integrates psychological process, aesthetic experience, and spiritual realisation.

Contribution of the Paper

This work makes a substantial contribution to the developing fields of transcultural healing studies and in-depth psychology by:

1. Reframing health and healing through the lens of svāsthyā instead of symptom relief or stress management.
2. Outlining the indigenous epistemological model of caturdĕṣṭi, which can both support and challenge Western empiricism.
3. Showing how antarāṅga sādhanā and bahiraṅga can be used as methodological tools for profound psychological transformation.
4. Making inner work relational and embodied by connecting performative praxis (nāṭya and rasa) with philosophical inquiry (darśana).
5. Presenting Citta Vidyā as a modern, contextually appropriate practice that combines contemplative science, psychology, and the arts.

This synthesis suggests a new field of Indic Integral Psychology, moving the conversation beyond comparative philosophy by building a dynamic bridge between inner science and psychological praxis.

Directions for Future Research

1. Empirical Validation of Svāsthyaň: To investigate markers of samāhita citta, develop mixed-method studies that combine phenomenology, qualitative inquiry, and physiological measures (e.g., HRV, EEG coherence).
2. Pedagogical Applications: Create and assess curricula that incorporate Citta Vidyā and •ravaṇa–manana–nididhyāsana approaches in educational and organizational settings.

3. Therapeutic Frameworks: Create psychotherapy models based on Yogic ontology that use pratyāhāra–dhyāna–samādhi processes to address trauma, relational conflict, and existential anxiety.
4. Cross-Cultural Dialogue: To establish IKS as an equal partner in research on global consciousness, interact with neurophenomenology, embodied cognition, and integrative psychotherapy.
5. Wholeness Metrics: Develop instruments for evaluating svāsthyaň that encompass not only mental health but also ethical, artistic, and spiritual aspects.

Conclusion

"Radical Wholeness" serves as both a practical framework and a philosophical assertion. It demands a paradigm change, viewing consciousness as the foundation of all experience rather than the mind as an object. By doing this, it reestablishes the line connecting education, recovery, and freedom, providing a route for modern seekers and academics to rethink psychology as a disciplined art of regaining wholeness, or a sādhanā. The chaos outside is reflected in our inner states. The fragmentation is not just psychological; it is ontological, a subtle and multilayered fracture of our very being. Additionally, it serves as a haven for illness. It produces dissonance that disturbs our basic sense of existence as well as our psycho-somatic complex.

One's mind changes from a disturbed mind (vyutthita citta) to a balanced, silent, and attentive mind (samāhita citta) through yoga practice. This opens the door to a deep comprehension of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. A samādhi-anchored mind. After passing through the "ocean of sorrow," the individual returns to co-create a community of truth seekers (sat-sangha), where self-discipline (tapas), self-reflection (svādhāyana), and surrender (īśvarapraṇidhāna) foster the individual quest (Bharata Muni, n.d.; Abhinavagupta, n.d.).

The authors of this paper have studied these practices, contemporized, and contextualised them, creating Citta Vidyā. Citta Vidyā integrates the principles and practices outlined in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra as taught by Yogacharya Krishnamacharya. By blending exercises and techniques from Dance, Theatre, Music, and Art, Citta Vidya creates a learning experience that is experiential, immersive, and transformative. It uses the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana as the backdrop for an embodied and mental learning process, helping individuals internalise these principles and practices to incorporate them into their lives.

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