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Overview of Proceedings of six selected Webinars Organized by GI4QC Forum

What is Consciousness? How do you perceive it?

This webinar, which was moderated by Mr. Anand Prakash of GI4QC Forum, had a happiness, wellness & spiritual life coach, Mr. Navneet Kumar, a management consultant specialising in business process improvements, Mr. Vinod Tiwari and a passionate techie & philosopher, Mr. Vinod Kulkarni sharing their thoughts on Consciousness.

Consciousness is that substratum or base which reveals all thoughts, perceptions and feelings and also itself. If we enquire about it diligently, we can actually experience Consciousness within ourselves. One way to experience or perceive Consciousness is meditation. In meditation the senses are inactive, object related thoughts cease, internal chatter ceases and there is nothing which is criss-crossing the mind. In such a state the subject shines as pure Consciousness or Consciousness reveals itself.

The realisation that Consciousness is our true nature results in experiencing a 'completeness' at all times. This gives so much energy and focus to whatever one is doing that the stress and strain of living just drops.

The knowledge that we are all connected and we can impact each other in terms of frequencies, vibrations, feelings, emotions etc. is the base for coaching process. It is this interconnection with the person you are coaching that makes coaching very different from consulting, training and even counselling. The consciousness aspect is the basis for relating to the coachee and encouraging him/her to look inwards and to do some introspection.

Although Consciousness seems so easy to access, most people are not able to relate to it. Most of us are somewhere in the spectrum that lies between Awareness (or Consciousness) on one side and a materialist mindset on the other side. The main problem is that we are conditioned to think in a certain way and we get so involved in all the material things that we forget our true nature and become a thing itself.

Significance and Role of Mental & Spiritual Health in Overall Well-Being

This webinar, which was moderated by Mr. Anand Prakash of GI4QC Forum, had a holistic life alchemist, Mr. Kamakoty Krishnamoorthy, a scientist and psychologist, Dr. Jyotsna Singh, and a sanskrit professor specialising in vedic darshan and dharma shastra, Prof. Vinay Kumar Vidyalankar, sharing their views on mental & spiritual health.

We are all spiritual beings in a material body and we should remember this. We are essentially made of three bodies - Gross Body, Subtle Body and Causal Body. All the three aspects must be considered and a proper balance needs to be maintained amongst them for good health. Unfortunately, most of us are not awakened to our 'Godliness' or Divinity.

We keep gathering or accumulating sanskaric impressions or imprints in our subtle body due to our actions of thoughts, actions of words and actions of deeds. These sanskaric impressions or vrittis keep us mentally and emotionally occupied and we remain entangled in them.

Knowledge of the concepts of sanskars is important for mental well-being. Meditative practices help us navigate beyond these sanskars or vrittis and help us realise our true nature.

Our belief system is very important in not just shaping our emotional and mental life but also our physical life. As we know, our belief system impacts our thoughts & emotions. They, in turn, can have an influence on the gene expression and thus have an impact on our physical well-being as well. Hence, we should change our belief system and life by proper management of our thoughts and emotions if we want to enjoy good health.

Health is not just being disease-free. The Sanskrit term for health is swastha which comes from two root words - swa = one's own and stha = stabilize. Hence, swastha means to be stabilised or established in one's Self. A person who is swastha is one who has realised his true Self or true nature. Once you are stabilised in this knowledge you are no more disturbed by what is happening around you in this world. Nor are you affected by things or situations which are not under your control. In other words, our mental well-being is ensured when we are stabilised in the knowledge that this body is just a means for our 'real self' to experience the journey of life.

“Science & Spirituality: Two sides of the same coin?” - Exploring prevalent worldviews

This webinar, which was moderated by Mr. Anish Rakheja, Founder, Krescon Coaches, had a Ph.D. (Quantum Optics), Prof. (Dr.) Jai Paul Dudeja, an IIT-IIM alumnus, Mr. Vijay Pandey, and a young MBBS doctor, Dr. Naman Jain, sharing their views on Science & Spirituality.

Science is the systematic study of the objective universe and Spirituality is the means to realise our true nature or to awaken to our inner reality. Consciousness Studies (which belongs to the intersecting domain of Science and Spirituality) is one of the hottest topics of study in the scientific community today. In simple terms, consciousness can be defined as awareness of reality. Neuroscientists, biologists, physicists, psychologists... everyone is trying to understand its nature and how it works.

Quantum physicists are exploring the role of consciousness in the measurement process. The existence of both potentiality and actuality in the subatomic world (wave particle duality) was revealed by the double slit experiments. While it is widely believed that consciousness has some role in converting the potentiality to actuality (wave to particle) the mechanism is not yet understood.

Everything in this universe exists in space and time. So, space and time must be there before the universe came into existence. Also, time, which is a concept needed to define any change, must have existed before space came into existence. We can say this because there would have been a moment when there was no concept of space and then space came into existence. This implies that time precedes space.

However, there should be "something or someone" who perceived or was aware of creation of space and time. This "something or someone" is consciousness and everything in this universe manifests in consciousness. Nothing can exist outside consciousness. This sequence of universe coming into existence after space, which in turn, came into existence after time and time was preceded by consciousness is very logical sequence of creation.

And, instead of asking the question whether Science and Spirituality are two sides of the same coin, the question to be asked is that if consciousness existed before everything else came into existence and everything manifests in it then can we say that consciousness is God (or Brahman, as mentioned in Upanishads). Also, we know that we are also consciousness. So, are we also God or Brahman?

Medical Science, on the other hand, holds a very different perspective on consciousness. It defines consciousness as responsiveness or decision-making power of a person in a given situation. Medical Science also believes that brain produces consciousness and considers mind and consciousness to be the same thing.

Science & Spirituality: What is Reality?

This fireside chat was a conversation between Mr. Anish Rakheja, Founder, Krescon Coaches and Mr. Vinod Kulkarni, a computer engineer, passionate techie & philosopher. The session touched upon many concepts and questions related to Reality. Both the participants shared a lot of interesting insights and mentioned many philosophies and scientific findings to build up their arguments. They also explained why this seemingly simple question - What is Reality - has been a topic of debate for centuries and why a clear answer has not been found till date.

Before understanding what is Reality, we have to understand how we use reasoning to ascertain whether something is true. We try to gather information about that thing from multiple channels and if all channels reveal the same information, we decide that the information is true. However, there is a flaw in this methodology because this methodology only demonstrates that the information from various channels is consistent. Consistency does not imply truth.

As per advaita (non-dualistic) school of philosophy there are two aspects or parts of Reality (1) one which has existence as its intrinsic attribute and hence it always exists and is eternal or real or truth (2) one which does not have existence as its intrinsic attribute and it seems real only as long as it 'borrows' existence. In other words, it is an illusion or mithya or maya as its existence is only for a limited span of time.

If we delve deep into our world of experience we find that there are different kinds of realities - mathematical reality, abstract reality, physical reality, experiential reality, perceived reality,

mental reality and so on. For instance, mathematical reality is explored and analysed in exactly the same way by everyone and the results are same for everybody. Hence, this reality is unchanging. Physical reality, on the other hand, is how we perceive the world around us and it is dependent on our senses.

Science believes that there is a whole world which is out there and the shared or accumulated knowledge about what is out there is the reality. For example, the shared knowledge of the humanity tells us that the earth is round. This knowledge that the earth is round is part of our memory or mind and any knowledge that is there in our mind will affect what we believe earth to be. So even though we perceive that the earth is flat we accept the reality of earth to be different from our perception of earth.

Extending this argument to Reality, we can say that the model of Reality that we create is always going to be sort of a mixture of the perceived reality and what we think Reality is in terms of the knowledge that we have accumulated as an individual.

While Science provides very rich information about the behaviour of matter and answers how things work, it leaves us in the dark about the intrinsic nature of matter. Scientists are struggling to define what reality of matter is because as they explore deeper into matter they realise that it is all 'structure' with no 'stuff'. But that is so counter intuitive. How can a 'structure' exist without 'stuff' coming into picture.

We must ponder over these findings of Science and we should change the ground rules of how we look at Reality and how we model it.

The model or theory which best explains this observation of 'structure' with no associated 'stuff' is the Projection Theory. This is quite similar to the concept of Reality as explained by the advaita philosophy or some schools of Buddhism. However, the point to be appreciated here is that not all Indic philosophies believe in Projection Theory or Mithya or Illusion. Most of these philosophies/theories take the world to be real.

Irrespective of whether the world around us is abstract or real we agree on one thing. Any event is essentially some kind of an information change that is happening in the world. This information change has to be perceived by someone or something, because, if it is not sensed or perceived by anyone or anything, then, at the very fundamental level we can question whether that event actually happened or not. In other words, what is not perceived does not exist. Perception by someone or something is an essential requirement for existence.

This implies that we are looking at Reality from the platform called mind. The frame of reference from which we are experiencing Reality is 'we ourselves in this life time'.

We say a dream is an illusion only because we are able to appreciate that dreams come and go when we observe them from another level - the non-dream frame of reference (i.e. waking state). However, we call this life and world real as we are not able to appreciate it from another level which is outside our frame of reference.

The mechanism which creates Reality is quite different from the experience of that Reality. We need to understand that experiential or perceived Reality seems far more real than the mechanisms which generate it. Just like the data in a computer – what we see on the screen and how it is stored internally is very different.

In Projection Theory model there is an observer and the observed. The whole observed is just an arrangement. Our mind is doing pattern matching and categorising things, seeing logic in how things are arranged and seeing cause and effect. However, in Reality, everything is just an arrangement and 'I'ness is just pure observer. When this 'I'ness gets mixed with the contents of the world, it also starts “believing” that it is a thing in this world and all the transactional reality of the world starts to happen!

High Energy Levels – Are they meant only for Rishis and Yogis or for commoners as well?

This fireside chat was a conversation between Mr. Anand Prakash of GI4QC Forum and Mr. Karthik Sundara Rajan who has been exploring the connect between Science and Yoga, meditation & other spiritual practices for over two decades and is eagerly working on identifying avenues for practical implementation of the spiritual knowledge.

In this session Karthik discussed the “Science of Dhyanam”.

If something can be brought into the realm of cause and effect relationship and if this relationship is replicable then we call it Science. Objective science is the study of objects around us whereas subjective science is the study of our inner world.

Along with our physical body, we also have a mind which takes sensory inputs and is involved in processing the thoughts. However, when we observe the mind we find that for the same stimulus the response may be different from person to person and time to time. So, there are some discriminating faculties beyond the mind like emotions and intelligence which define us along with our body and mind.

And beyond these there is a kind of “power source” which makes the body, mind, intelligence and emotions work. And when it is absent the entire body-mind-intelligence-emotions system stops functioning. This “power house” cannot be perceived through senses or mind and is a formless presence. This formless presence is the quintessence of Spirituality.

Dhyanam or meditation is the process of connecting to this formless presence by dropping the mind, intelligence and emotions. It involves transcendence of mind, integrity of intelligence and equanimity of emotions.

Consciousness, Randomness and Related Applications

This webinar, which was moderated by Mr. Vinod Kulkarni of GI4QC Forum, was an exclusive presentation by Mr. Kavan Ganapathy. Kavan is a consciousness researcher and parapsychologist with a background in physics and profound interest in mind-matter interactions.

Mind-matter interaction experiments show us the possibility that consciousness somehow 'lures

matter into sentience'. However, in spite of statistically significant results obtained in many scientifically conducted experiments on mind-matter interactions, this domain of research work is generally set aside as pseudoscience.

Kavan has worked on the replication of Global Consciousness Project and mind-matter interaction experiments in lab settings at CU Boulder as a Senior Professional Research Assistant. He is currently working on Remote Viewing research & its applications and is a professional remote viewer at the Hawaiiin Remote Viewers Guild (HRVG).

In this presentation Kavan explained the setup and the methodology used in Global Consciousness Project using a true Random Number Generator called 'psyleron'. Kavan was also one of the participants in this experiment and he shared his experience of how he sat in front of a computer with a TRNG source and attempted to affect the quantum randomness arising from the psyleron device using his thoughts alone. He shared the results obtained and touched upon the significance of these results.

Remote viewing is a practice of seeking impressions of an object or event distant in both space and time (non-local) with the faculties of the mind, which otherwise is not accessible through our five sensory organs. Kavan explained the methodology of this practise, the science behind this and its potential practical applications.
