Ancient Hints for a Modern Method of Studying Consciousness

Varun Khanna
Lunchtime Seminar, November 19, 2014
Consciousness Studies – Ancient or Modern?
So Many Theories...
Shankara

World = Illusion

Consciousness = Existence

Our essence = Consciousness

Body = An illusory vehicle that we inhabit
Physicalism
Brand New Science!

Biology
Chemistry
Physics
Psychology
Sociology
Consciousness
LIFE

Experience
- Experienced
- Experiencer
- Experiencing

MATTER

Atom
- Proton
- Neutron
- Electron
Rules of Causality

1. Every effect has a cause
Pyramid of Causality
Pyramid of Causality

Universe

Earth
Rules of Causality

1. Every effect has a cause

2. Every effect is nothing but the cause in a new manifestation (new name and form)

3. If you remove the cause, the effect cannot remain
Pyramid of Causality

Consciousness

Existence

You
Ancient Ideas

- Mind = Flow of thoughts
- Objects + Consciousness = Thought
- Thought – Objects = Consciousness
- How can we achieve this?
- Meditation
“Meditation”? 

- **Our Minds**
  - *Mala*
  - “Dirt”
  - *Vikṣepa*
  - Agitation
  - *Ajñāna*
  - Ignorance

- **The Prescription**
  - *Karma*
  - Rituals
  - *Upāsanā*
  - Spiritual Practices
  - *Jñāna*
  - Knowledge
What we can learn

- Physical Objective?
- Not Necessarily!
- Experiential Objective of Research
- This may be the way forward for Consciousness Studies
The New Study of Consciousness

- Bridge between
  - Ancient and Modern
  - East and West
  - Science and Spirituality