Principles of a Contemplative Science of Mind

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Contemplation & Science

- Contemplation > (L.) *contemplari* (to gaze attentively) > (G.) *theōria* (to observe): the total devotion to revealing, clarifying, and making manifest the nature of reality

- Science > (L.) *scire* (to know) > (IE.) > *sker* (to cut, separate): Principles and procedures for the systematic pursuit of knowledge involving the recognition and formulation of a problem, the collection of data through observation and experiment, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses
Fragmentation of Knowledge

- Religious and philosophical contemplation of subjective, mental and spiritual domains of reality

- Scientific observation of objective, physical, quantitative domain of reality
Fragmentation of Meaning

- Disintegration of the pursuits of genuine happiness, truth, and virtue.

- The birth of objective scientific inquiry and the death of subjective contemplative inquiry.

- Instead of seeking the mind of God within, natural philosophers sought the mind of the Creator by way of his Creation.
Dimensions of Happiness

- Hedonic happiness > experience of pleasant stimuli and the avoidance of unpleasant stimuli ~ the hunter-gatherer phase

- Genuine well-being > cultivation of a wholesome way of life, mental balance, and experiential knowledge ~ the cultivator phase
Social Well-Being

• Harmony within the family, communities, nations, and international relations

• Harmony with the ecosphere, maintaining a sustainable economy, without environmental degradation

• A harmonious balance of unity and diversity
Knowing the Mind

- The embodied mind, including conscious and unconscious mental processes, conditioned by the body, personal history, physical environment, and society

- Studied indirectly by interrogation and examination of behavior and the brain, and examined directly through introspection
Psychological Well-Being

- Conative balance
- Attentional balance
- Cognitive balance
- Emotional balance
Knowing Consciousness

- Substrate: An immaterial, vacuous, mental space, devoid of sensory and mental appearances
- Substrate consciousness: Consciousness of the substrate, characterized by a sense of well-being, luminosity, and nonconceptuality
- Manifests in dreamless sleep, death, and meditative concentration (samādhi)
Existential Well-Being

- Perceived directly by first-person experimentation with the use of *samādhi*

- Inferred indirectly from a third-person perspective on the basis of verbal reports, behavior, and physiological signs suggestive of past-lives
The Ground of Being

- Absolute space: the dimension out of which relative space-time and mass-energy emerge

- Primordial consciousness: nonlocal, atemporal consciousness, nondual from absolute space, pervading all phenomena, characterized by immutable bliss, knowledge, and virtue
Spiritual Well-Being

- Perceived directly by first-person observation through the cultivation of contemplative insight, breaking through the dualities of subject and object, mind and matter

- Inferred indirectly from a third-person perspective on the basis of remote viewing and precognition
Scientific Skepticism

Richard Feynman:

“One of the ways of stopping science would be only to do experiments in the region where you know the law. But experimenters search most diligently, and with the greatest effort, in exactly those places where it seems most likely that we can prove our theories wrong. In other words we are trying to prove ourselves wrong as quickly as possible, because only in that way can we find progress.”
Expanding the Scope of Science

- Occam’s Razor: “It is vain to do with more assumptions what can be done with fewer assumptions.”
- Apply Occam’s Razor to the assumption that orthodox scientific methods are the only means of exploring reality as a whole.
- Add rigorous contemplative inquiry to science, and what might we gain?
A Revolution in the Mind Sciences

Geoffrey Carr (Science Editor of *The Economist*):

“My guess is that we won’t really understand consciousness until we have a paradigm shift—that somebody will wake up one morning and say ‘Eureka’! A new wave of thought will then probably emerge, and that will be the basis of a proper theory of consciousness.”
A Renaissance of Meaning

- In the modern world, the pursuits of happiness, truth, and virtue are seen as unrelated or even incompatible.

- Many of the crises engendered by the 20th century result from that disintegration.

- Re-integrate these three pursuits, and the meaning of life may emerge from the ground of being.