

III-6. The Unknown and the Doubtful

Doubt is intrinsic in assertion based on a point of view, a generalization, a stable or momentary insight, or a meaning of the word and its derivatives, as well as the personal knowledge.

- Samantbhadra (ca. 200 CE).

Identifiable contradictions are cause for concern because they are associated with the intangibles. Faith sweeps away contradictions under the rug and replaces these by a set of unknowable that can only be described in self-referential ways. For the origins of the foundation of the evidence-based analysis with verifiable parts consider:

Q. Can a concern be addressed from what we know about it or from what we do not know about it?

A. Certainly a concern can not be addressed without information that can affirm assertion. However, to see the concern as a whole it is also necessary to know what is not known about it.

Evidence based assertions and practice-based conduct affirm what we know, and also point to what we do not know. We also use a large number of words (Table IV-1) to hide such ignorance, and express things that fall some where in-between. Need for such words attests to the lack of a perfect plan for human condition or at least for the constructs of it.

Word abstractions do not attest to the reality of a construct. Words do not necessarily focus even on a single state. Word identification is only an early step in addressing a concern. Having a word for a feeling does not necessarily mean that we know what it is about. English language is remarkably adept at having terms for states of ignorance while shedding little light on

such states. Diplomats, politicians, negotiators and experts of all stripes have turned the expression of ignorance into an art form. Commenting on the fact that *Sun never set over the British Empire*, a humorist added, *not even God could trust the British in the dark*.

Words to express perceived doubt are not necessarily synonymous. They emphasize quality of distinguishable states. The range of partial-truth values enhances our appreciation and experience of entities, events, observations, thoughts, and actions. Considering the mere number of such states, it is not surprising that most people are occupied with such concerns. Words to distinguish the difference enhance awareness that often helps in finding solutions.

Doubt suggests disorder and chaos. If certainty of order is desirable for representation, chaos is preferable to disorder.

We speak of perfect order if the prior knowledge can predict the outcome. It is like *you get what you ordered at a favorite restaurant where the management has not changed and the chef is not having a bad-hair day*.

Contrary to popular belief the state of total disorder or perfect order is rare and difficult to identify. Most of what we experience in life is chaos. Recall the frenzy in approaching a math problem in the 6th grade. In the hind sight it is invariably so simple, but not until superfluous connection imposed by the mind are severed.

However *it is impossible to separate milk from water when both are intermingled with each other. It is neither possible nor logical to separate two things, such as the life and matter when they are inextricably blended together in the body. No one can point out in such cases that this is one thing and this -another.* [Sanmati Tark, Siddhsen Divakar, ca. 500 CE].

Against Gods and Humbug

Preface

1. Paradox of Choices
2. Representation for Potential
3. Feedback from Interactions
4. What Is Rationality?
5. Meaning to a Speck of Dust
6. The Unknown and the Doubtful
7. Actions Have Consequences
8. Beginning of a Decision
9. Tools for Thought Search
10. Living with Doubt
11. Who to Trust?
12. Living with Incomplete Knowledge
13. Do People Tell Lies?
14. Social Influences of Non-violence
15. Greed and Grab
16. Conduct with Consistency
17. An Activist Perspective
18. Causality: End or Means to Reality
19. Negate the Wishful
20. Man is Capable of Being Rational
21. Making Decisions
22. Keeping Viable Options Open
23. Inference and Successful Behavior
24. Genesis of Syad: The Logical Doubt
25. Science-based Conduct?
26. Philosophy and Logic for Action
27. Actions That Matter
28. Tragic versus Tragedy
29. Representation of Order with Room for Doubt
30. War Promises Meaning to the Otherwise Meaningless Lives
31. A Peace to End All Peace
32. Knowledge: Been There
33. Equation for Potential
34. Why I Am Not Moral
35. Unleashing Thought: Taming Brawn, Grunt, and Smarts