

Historicity vs. Human Potential

There are limits to ordinary human knowledge

→ Impossible to transcend this limit → Physicalism

→ Limits transcended only after death

Limits *can* be transcended *during* human life. The issue is *how*.

A

Top-down: God's intervention in human history is the *only* way for man to know the ultimate truth.

- God sent very few prophets/son to bridge the infinite knowledge gap between humans and the ultimate truth.
- This historical intervention is unique, and a non-reproducible space-time discontinuity.
- History-Centrism: narratives about the event become canonized as the core dogma.

- Privileged positioning: canon, its institutional protectors, re-interpreters, and promoters.
- Open exploration seen as a threat to canon.
- Built-in exclusiveness: One True History. "Tolerance" not based on legitimacy of others but based on one's superiority.
- Mystics persecuted as threats to institutional power; only dead can become saints; hence, no continuity or systematization or *embodied* adhyatma-vidya.

Non-Negotiable Grand Narrative of History

B

Bottom-up: Humans have potential (no matter how rarely achieved) to realize ultimate truth during this life.

- Rishis claimed a state of hearing sruti (eternal truth that was *always* there); similarly, Buddhist nirvana, Jaina, jivanmukti,...
- *Adhyatma-vidya* (inner science) empirical claims, re-tested by each generation and culture: yoga/meditation, tantra, bhakti, ..
- Methodologies of *adhyatma-vidya* constantly debated by peers, and improved upon, are core competences.

- Privileged positioning: *embodied knowing*; hence, living enlightened masters overrule institutions.
- Re-discovered / reinterpreted for each time and context by stream of living gurus; result is massive libraries of spiritual experiences.
- Empiricism, skepticism, debate, openness.
- Core competence is in *adhyatma-vidya*, not in historiography.
- Built-in pluralism and poly-conceptions.

Spiritual Eco-System