

Knowledge, Knower, and Known

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The question: What is knowledge, who is the knower, and what is it that one can know? How do we ground these concepts in experience, and how does the Co-existentialism of Shri A. Nagraj compare with the non-dualism of Advaita Vedanta and the physicalism of modern science and philosophy?

This study explores these questions from three paradigms: **Madhyasth Darshan** (Co-existentialism), **Advaita Vedanta**, and **Modern Science / Philosophy** — then compares and critically reviews all three.

Quick Glossary

Term	Plain meaning
<i>Jeevan</i>	The sentient self – in Shri Nagraj’s view a real, eternal, atom-scale entity that works <i>through</i> the body.
<i>Drishta-pad</i> (Seer status)	The unique capacity of the human being in existence to observe, understand, and evaluate all orders of nature.
<i>Darshan-drishya-drishhti</i>	Madhyasth Darshan’s structure of worldview, scene, and perspective: the perceiver uses perspective to see the real scene and arrive at holistic understanding.
<i>Gyan-vivek-vigyan</i>	Knowledge, wisdom/discrimination, and science/systematic know-how – the way understanding becomes evaluation and practical participation.
<i>Sanvedansheelta</i> / *sangyansheelta*	Sensitivity (body- and sense-based responsiveness) and comprehension/cognisance (the understanding proper to <i>jeevan</i>) – the two modes of engaging the world.
<i>Pramana</i>	Means or proof of valid knowledge; in Madhyasth Darshan, realization (<i>anubhav</i>) evidenced in conduct is the ultimate proof.
<i>Bhram</i>	Delusion – living by inherited belief rather than understanding, rooted in identifying <i>jeevan</i> with the body.
Coexistence (<i>sah-astitva</i>)	Existence seen as all units inseparably present together in Space.
<i>Atman</i> / * Brahman *	In Advaita Vedanta: the innermost Self / the one ultimate, non-dual reality.
<i>Mithya</i>	Advaita’s term for the world: dependent, provisional appearance, not absolutely real.
Hard Problem	The mystery of why physical brain processes are accompanied by subjective, felt experience at all.

1. The Madhyasth Darshan Answer

The claim in one sentence: Knowledge is the realization of coexistence evidenced as wisdom, science, and humane conduct; the knower is the active sentient self (*jeevan*) operating through the human body in seer-status (*drishta-pad*); and the knowable is

existence itself — Omnipresence and all real units in their relationships, orderliness, and conduct.

What is Knowledge?

According to Shri A. Nagraj, knowledge (*gyan*) is not a subjective construct, a private mental state, or a mere collection of information. It has an ontological base, an epistemic structure, and a practical test.

1. Space itself is Knowledge. In its ultimate sense, Space (*shunya / vyapak*) is not empty nothingness. It is omnipresent, transparent, all-pervasive, and the uniform energy in which all units are saturated. This omnipresent Space is itself Knowledge:

“Knowledge itself is the omnipresent Omnipotence. This itself is referred to as Space.” — MVD, p. 35

“The Space (Omnipresence) itself is knowledge. Omnipresence itself is Omnipotence.” — MVD, p. 143

“Space itself is knowledge, knowledge itself is Omnipresence,” — MVD, p. 155

This should not be confused with Advaita’s Brahman or with modern panpsychism. In Madhyasth Darshan, Space is not an individual conscious subject and not a unit among other units. It is the omnipresent, non-transforming medium in which all material (*jada*) and sentient (*chaitanya*) units are submerged, energised, regulated, and conserved. The sentient knower is still *jeevan*, not Space itself.

2. Knowledge unfolds as *gyan-vivek-vigyan*. When realized by the human being, knowledge becomes evident as wisdom and science, not as belief alone:

“The realisation in coexistence itself is the unfolding of knowledge. The study is in, by and for realisation in coexistence. Knowledge itself is evident in the form of wisdom and science.” — MVD, p. 35

This gives Madhyasth Darshan a distinctive epistemic structure:

1. **Gyan** — understanding reality as coexistence.
2. **Vivek** — wisdom/discrimination that evaluates life by justice, dharma, and truth rather than only pleasure, health, and profit.
3. **Vigyan** — science or systematic knowledge that enables right experiment, production, and participation in orderliness.

Thus knowledge is not only contemplative. It must become correct perspective, correct evaluation, and correct practical participation.

3. The Threefold Content of Complete Knowledge. In human life, knowledge has three inseparable areas:

“1. Knowledge of jeevan 2. Knowledge of holistic view of existence 3. Knowledge of humane conduct” – SB, p. 116

To have complete knowledge (*paripoorna gyan*) means to understand the nature of the self (*jeevan*), the structure of existence as coexistence (*sah-astitva*), and how to live in harmony with other humans and nature (humane conduct).

4. Worldview, Scene, and Perspective (*darshan-drishya-drishti*). Madhyasth Darshan does not begin from a detached subject staring at external objects. It describes a perceiver using a perspective to see the scene, and the successful accomplishment of this process is understanding:

“The activity and process that a perceiver uses through their perspective for seeing the scene itself is worldview, the accomplishment from which is the understanding or knowledge.” – MVD, p. 84

Here:

1. **Drishya (scene)** is the world of activities — existence as it appears in the present.
2. **Drishti (perspective)** is the act of seeing, understanding, recognizing, and evaluating realities.
3. **Darshan (worldview / holistic view)** is the accomplished understanding obtained through right perspective.

This is a key difference from both comparison partners. Advaita’s *drig-drishya* analysis uses seer-seen discrimination to negate the seen and arrive at the actionless witness. Madhyasth Darshan instead asks whether the human’s perspective can become aligned with coexistence so that the scene is understood as it is and then evidenced in conduct. Modern science, by contrast, privileges third-person observation and public modelling; Madhyasth Darshan also demands evidence, but includes first-person realization and value-fulfilment in relationships as part of that evidence.

5. Knowing, Believing, Recognizing, and Fulfilling. Knowledge is expressed dynamically in human behavior through four interconnected activities: *janna* (knowing), *manna* (believing), *pahchanna* (recognizing), and *nirvaha karna* (fulfilling):

“What is knowledge? Knowing and believing constitute knowledge.” – JV, p. 165

In a deluded human, believing is separated from knowing (believing without knowing). In an awakened human, they are unified:

“Believe what is known Know what is believed” – MVD, p. 12

When we *know* existence as coexistence and *believe* in this reality, we spontaneously *recognize* our relationships with all units in nature and *fulfill* our values (justice, trust, cooperation) in behavior.

6. The evidence chain: realization, behavior, experiment. Madhyasth Darshan’s test of knowledge is not private conviction alone. The text gives a practical evidence chain:

“Realisation – Behaviour – Experiment” – MVD, p. 12

“Realisation itself is the ultimate evidence, Evidence itself is the understanding or knowledge, Understanding itself is manifest, The manifest itself is resolution, work and behaviour, Work and behaviour itself is evidence, Evidence itself is awakened tradition, Awakened tradition itself is coexistence.” – MVD, p. 12

This is why humane conduct is not an ethical appendix to knowledge. It is part of the verification of knowledge. If a person claims to know coexistence but cannot evidence resolution, justice, prosperity, fearlessness, and coexistence in living, the knowledge has not yet become complete evidence.

7. Realization (anubhuti). Ultimate knowledge is direct realization in coexistence, but this realization is expected to become visible in thought, behavior, and experiment:

“The realisation in coexistence itself is the complete knowledge.” – MVD, p. 116

“Realisation in knowledge (gyan-anubhuti): - Realisation in the ultimate truth” – MVD, p. 316

“delusion-less knowledge (nirbhram gyan): - Knowing, understanding and imparting the understanding of the realities the way they are.” – MVD, p. 317

8. The means of knowing: study, realization, and the proof of conveying. Madhyasth Darshan does not organize knowing around a list of independent instruments of cognition (perception, inference, testimony) the way classical Indian epistemology does. All means converge on one outcome: direct realization in coexistence, which is then validated in living and in the ability to impart understanding to another.

“The proof of our comprehension lies in our ability to convey it to others; this is the litmus test of our wisdom.” – JV, p. 26

Perception and reasoning are necessary but preliminary; the decisive proof (*pramana*) is realization (*anubhav*) evidenced as authentic conduct (*pramanikta*). This is why the evidence chain above begins with realization rather than with sense data.

9. Sensitivity (*sanvedansheelta*) and comprehension (*sangyansheelta*). Madhyasth Darshan distinguishes two modes by which a human engages the world. *Sensitivity* is body- and sense-based responsiveness – the mode humans share with animals, oriented to pleasure, health, and profit. *Comprehension* (cognisance) is the understanding proper to *jeevan*, oriented to relationship, value, and orderliness. Knowing in the full sense requires both, held in balance:

“...the recognising and fulfilling of the insentient and the sentient world is through the balance of cognisance and sensitivity.” – SB, p. 64

The human predicament, in this view, is that we have so far lived almost entirely in sensitivity:

“Thus far, humans have only lived within the purview of sensitivity; hence the issues of accumulation, comfort, revolt-rebellion and exploitation have kept coming up.” – JV, p. 166

To know existence as coexistence is precisely to rise from sense-bound sensitivity to *jeevan*'s comprehension.

10. Error and its correction: the theory of delusion (*bhram*). Any account of knowledge needs an account of error. In Madhyasth Darshan, error is not the presence of a false object but a specific misidentification: taking *jeevan* to be the body, which forces life to run on inherited belief rather than understanding.

“This adherence to ‘belief’ rather than ‘knowledge’ forms the basis of delusion.” – JV, p. 93

“The root of delusion lies in identifying jeevan with the body.” – JV, p. 93

The correction is not negation of the world but accurate recognition – “*jeevan* should be recognised as *jeevan*, and the body as the body” (JV, p. 93). Error is therefore removable in principle, through study and realization, rather than an irreducible feature of the knowing situation.

11. Truth and the removability of mystery. Madhyasth Darshan recognizes truth in three registers — absolute, relative, and objective — and treats their transmission as the very source of reality in human tradition:

“The tradition of imparting the understanding of absolute truth, relative truth, and objective truth is itself the source of reality.” — MVD, p. 37

From this follows one of the darshan’s sharpest epistemological commitments: existence is *fully knowable*, and “mystery” is not a permanent horizon but a removable deficit of understanding.

“The incompleteness in understanding the absolute state and the activity, is mystery.” — MVD, p. 209

“Eradication of mystery is only through the holistic view of reality.” — MVD, p. 209

Where Advaita finally calls ignorance “indescribable” (*anirvacaniya*) and modern science leaves the Hard Problem open, Madhyasth Darshan asserts that right understanding culminates in certitude, not residual mystery: “The holistic view of reality leads to ‘certitude’; otherwise, doubt persists” (MVD, p. 209).

Who is the Knower?

The knower (*gyata* or *drishta*) is the sentient self — **jeevan** — operating through the human body. Specifically, the human being is the locus where seer-status can be evidenced:

“The noteworthy points here are: 1. In coexistence, the human being is integrally and indivisibly present. 2. In existence, the human being is a seer (observer).” — SB, p. 188

“The human being alone is the seer-status in existence.” — SB, p. 239

Material things (like stones) and biological organisms (like plants) do not have the capacity to know. Animals have sensory awareness and react to pain or pleasure, but they cannot evaluate existence. Only the human being belongs to the **knowledge order** (*gyan avastha*) and has the capacity of understanding. However, this capacity must be awakened:

“Only awakened humans are recognisable in the seer status.” — MVD, p.

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This distinction is important: every human has the possibility of seer-status because every human has imagination, freedom of action, and the capacity for understanding; only the awakened human evidences that status in living.

The knower in Madhyasth Darshan is therefore not an actionless, passive witness. *Jeevan* is an active, structured, sentient unit. Its activities include hope in *mun*, thought in *vritti*, desire in *chitta*, resoluteness in *buddhi*, and realization in *atma*. (*Jeevan Vidya* presents the same structure as ten coordinated activities across the atom's nucleus and orbits — taste and selection in *mun*, deliberation and analysis in *vritti*, contemplation and visualization in *chitta*, enlightenment and resolve in *buddhi*, and realization and authenticity in *atma* — JV, p. 92.) The body is the instrument through which this *jeevan* acts; the brain (*medhas*) receives and processes signals related to *jeevan*'s aspirations, desires, and evidence (MVD, p. 83). This makes Madhyasth Darshan sharply different from Advaita: the inner self is not finally negated into an actionless witness, but understood as a real, active, constitutionally complete unit capable of awakening.

It also differs from modern physicalism. Modern neuroscience treats mind as brain activity. Madhyasth Darshan treats the brain as a bodily organ through which *jeevan* operates, and treats values and evaluation as activities of *jeevan*, not mechanical outputs of the body.

What is the Knowable (the Known)?

The knowable (*gyeya*) is **existence itself in the form of coexistence**. It includes Omnipresence and all units saturated in it:

“All units saturated in the Omnipresence (permeative and transparent) have form, properties, essential nature & dharma, and have inherent orderliness & participate in overall orderliness.” — MVD, p. 11

Therefore, to know something in Madhyasth Darshan is not merely to measure its external properties. It is to understand its form (*roop*), properties (*gun*), essential nature (*svabhav*), dharma, relationships, value, and participation in overall orderliness. The knowable includes:

1. **The Four Orders of Nature:** The material order (*padarth avastha*), biological order (*pran avastha*), animal order (*jeev avastha*), and knowledge order (*gyan avastha*).
2. **Omnipresence and Units:** Space as the omnipresent medium, and all countable units saturated in it.
3. **The Laws of Nature:** Effort, motion, result, balance, integration, development, awakening, and participation in overall orderliness.
4. **Relationships and Values:** The mutual expectations through which units participate in one another.

5. **Humane Conduct:** Justice, values, evaluation, mutual satisfaction, resolution, prosperity, fearlessness, and coexistence in human life.

Crucially, in Madhyasth Darshan, the known world is **absolutely real and perpetual** (*nitya*). It is not an illusion or a temporary mistake:

“Brahma is truth, the world is perpetual.” — *MVD, The Alternative, point 8*

This is the most direct contrast with Advaita Vedanta. Advaita resolves the knower-known distinction by sublating the known world into Brahman. Madhyasth Darshan resolves it by awakening the knower to the real coexistence of Omnipresence and world. The world is not negated; it is understood, recognized, and fulfilled in conduct.

2. The Advaita Vedanta Answer

The claim in one sentence: The true knower is the actionless witness Self (*Atman / sakshi*), which is identical to the ultimate reality (*Brahman*); the known world of diversity is a dependent appearance (*mithya*); and knowledge is the direct realization of this non-duality, dissolving the distinction between knower, known, and knowing.

The Seer and the Seen (*Drig-Drishya*)

Advaita Vedanta begins its inquiry by separating the Seer (*drig*) from the Seen (*drishya*). The fundamental rule of this discrimination (*viveka*) is that whatever is observed cannot be the observer:

“The form... is perceived and the eye... is its perceiver... It... is perceived and the mind... is its perceiver. The mind with... modifications is perceived and the Witness (the Self) is verily the perceiver... But... is not perceived...” — *DDV, p. 15*

Following this logic, the physical body is seen (observed), so it is not the Seer. Senses, emotions, and thoughts are also witnessed by the mind, so they are not the ultimate Seer. The ultimate Seer is the **Witness Consciousness** (*sakshi-caitanya / Atman*). This witness is never an object of perception; it is the ultimate subject:

“There are two things which are different from each other. They are the seer and the seen. The seer is Brahman and the seen is mAyA.” — *BJM, v.*

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The Nature of the Knower

In absolute reality (*paramartha*), Brahman is one, without a second (*ekamevaditiam*, CU 6.2.1). Therefore, there cannot be multiple, separate individual knowers. The individual knower (*jiva* or *ahamkara*) is a provisional appearance arising due to ignorance (*avidya*).

This happens through **superimposition** (*adhyasa*): we superimpose the qualities of the physical body and mind (like “I am tall,” “I am sad”) onto the Self, and we superimpose the self-luminous consciousness of the Self onto the inert body-mind complex. The true Self is actionless (*akriya*) and does not do anything (BSB, *Adhyasa Bhashya*).

The Nature of the Known

The known universe of diversity (objects, space, time, individuals) is **not absolutely real**. It is categorized as *mithya* — meaning it has dependent reality (like a clay pot which is nothing but clay, or a wave which is nothing but water):

“The pot, wall, etc., are all nothing but clay. Likewise, the entire universe is nothing but Brahman.” — *BJM*, v. 19

“Brahman is real, the universe is mithya, and the jiva is Brahman itself and not different.” — *BJM*, v. 20

The world appears real only as long as ignorance persists; once Brahman is realized, the world is sublated (*badhita*), and only Brahman remains.

Means of Knowledge and the Theory of Error

Advaita inherits the classical Indian analysis of valid knowledge (*pramana*) and accepts six means: perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*anumana*), comparison (*upamana*), postulation (*arthapatti*), non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*), and verbal testimony (*shabda*). Crucially, for the supreme truth of non-duality, only *shabda* — the revealed word of the Upanishads, processed through reasoning and meditation — is finally competent; perception and inference operate within the very subject-object duality that is to be transcended.

Advaita also offers a developed theory of error (*khyativada*). The stock example is mistaking a rope for a snake: the snake is neither real (it vanishes on knowledge) nor utterly unreal (it was genuinely experienced), but *anirvacaniya* — “indescribable” — a projection on a real substrate. Cosmic ignorance (*avidya / maya*) has the same structure writ large: the world is a real-seeming projection on Brahman, sublated the moment Brahman is known. This is the exact point at which Madhyasth Darshan diverges — it treats error as a removable misidentification within a fully real world, not as an indescribable appearance over a sole reality.

3. The Modern Scientific and Philosophical View

The claim in one sentence: The knower is a biological organism (human) whose brain processes generate the mind; the known is the physical universe of matter and energy; and knowledge is structured information validated by empirical testing, falsification, and intersubjective consensus.

What is Knowledge?

In modern science and analytical philosophy, knowledge is typically defined as **justified true belief** (in classical epistemology) or as **predictive modeling** (in cognitive science and naturalism). 1. **Methodological Naturalism:** Knowledge is obtained by formulating hypotheses about the physical world and testing them against empirical evidence (Popper 1959). It requires intersubjective verification: anyone must be able to replicate the results using the same instruments. 2. **Information Processing:** The brain builds neural networks that model the properties and behaviors of the environment (Kandel et al. 2021). These models are updated based on sensory feedback to optimize survival and action.

The classical “justified true belief” analysis is itself contested from within. Gettier (1963) showed that one can hold a justified true belief that is intuitively *not* knowledge, launching a long debate over what further condition — reliability, safety, or sensitivity to truth — knowledge requires. This unresolved difficulty over the very definition of “knowledge” sits alongside the more familiar metaphysical disputes about the knower and the known.

Who is the Knower?

Mainstream physicalist accounts in modern science and philosophy reject the existence of any eternal, non-physical soul, *jeevan*, or *Atman*. 1. **The Brain as the Mind:** Consciousness and the sense of self are emergent properties of complex neuronal systems (Dennett 1991; Churchland 1986). There is no “cartesian theater” or separate observer inside the brain; the self is a cognitive construct or illusion generated by the brain’s integration of sensory data. 2. **Causal Closure of the Physical:** The physical universe is causally closed, meaning that every physical event (such as a muscle moving) is entirely caused by preceding physical events (such as motor neurons firing). There is no room for a non-physical entity (*jeevan* or *Atman*) to inject energy or intention into the nervous system (Kim 2005).

What can be Known?

The knowable is the objective, physical universe of matter, energy, space, and time. Claims that cannot be publicly observed, measured, mathematically modeled, or indirectly inferred through successful prediction remain outside established scientific knowledge.

However, this third-person objective method leaves open the **Hard Problem of Consciousness:** why and how should physical brain processes give rise to subjective, first-

person experiences (Chalmers 1995; Nagel 1974)? Some modern philosophers take seriously the idea of *panpsychism* (consciousness is a fundamental property of matter) or *realistic monism* (Strawson 2006; Goff 2019), but these remain speculative interpretations rather than mainstream scientific findings.

Recent Developments: Beyond Simple Physicalism

Recent modern philosophy and cognitive science are more diverse than simple brain-reduction. The following developments are especially relevant for future comparison with Madhyasth Darshan:

- 1. Illusionism and phenomenal realism.** Illusionists argue that phenomenal consciousness, as usually conceived, is a powerful introspective illusion that must be explained rather than accepted as a basic datum (Frankish 2016). Recent Russellian and panpsychist accounts move in the opposite direction: they accept phenomenal consciousness as fundamental or intrinsic to reality, often as a dual-aspect monism rather than a substance dualism (Strawson 2006; Goff 2019; Hashemi 2025).
- 2. Predictive processing and the free energy principle.** Here the knower is not a passive spectator but a self-organising system that models the causes of sensory input, acts to reduce uncertainty, and maintains itself through active inference. This gives a modern naturalistic account of agency, selfhood, and “self-evidencing” without positing an eternal *jeevan* (Limanowski and Blankenburg 2013; Wiese 2024; Tufft et al. 2024).
- 3. Embodied, enactive, and situated selfhood.** 4E and enactive approaches treat cognition as embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended. The self is not merely an inner representation in the brain; it is shaped through body, environment, habit, and social practice (IEP Enactivism; Piredda 2024). This comes closer to Madhyasth Darshan’s insistence that knowing must become participation, although it still does not accept a constitutionally complete *jeevan*.
- 4. Social virtue epistemology.** Recent epistemology questions the individualistic picture of knowledge and stresses trust, testimony, epistemic environments, intellectual virtues, and collective maintenance of knowledge (Jarczowski and Riggs 2025). This is a useful modern comparison point for Madhyasth Darshan’s claim that knowledge must become awakened tradition and humane conduct.
- 5. Perspectival realism.** Recent philosophy of science argues that science is always a “view from somewhere”: historically situated, instrument-mediated, and community-based, yet still capable of realist knowledge (Massimi 2022). This is worth comparing with Madhyasth Darshan’s *darshan-drishya-drishti*: both reject a view-from-nowhere, but Madhyasth Darshan claims that right perspective can culminate in realization of coexistence.
- 6. Theory pluralism in consciousness science.** Contemporary consciousness research contains many competing theories, including global neuronal workspace, integrated information, higher-order, recurrent processing, illusionist, and panpsychist

accounts. A large adversarial test of IIT and GNWT found results that partly supported and partly challenged both (Melloni et al. 2025), and broad surveys now catalogue dozens of competing explanations of consciousness (Kuhn 2024), confirming that modern science has no settled account of subjective experience.

These developments do not remove the major modern objection to Madhyasth Darshan — the lack of publicly measurable evidence for *jeevan*. But they do make the comparison more subtle. The live modern debate is not only “matter versus soul”; it also asks whether cognition is brain-bound or embodied, individual or social, representational or enactive, reductive or panpsychist, and whether scientific knowledge is perspective-free or perspectival.

4. Comparing the Three Views

Comparative Matrix

Question	Madhyasth Darshan	Advaita Vedanta	Modern Science & Philosophy
What is Knowledge?	Realization of coexistence, unfolding as <i>gyan-vivek-vigyan</i> and humane conduct	Direct realization of Atman-Brahman identity; non-dual awareness (<i>jnana-svarupa</i>)	Justified true belief; predictive neural models of physical reality
Who is the Knower?	Active sentient <i>jeevan</i> operating through the body; human evidences seer-status (<i>drishta-pad</i>)	Actionless Witness Self (<i>Atman / sakshi</i>); individual knower (<i>jiva</i>) is provisionally real but ultimately sublated	Evolved biological organism (brain-mind complex); the “self” is an emergent cognitive construct
What is the Known?	Existence as coexistence: Omnipresence, all units, four orders, relationships, values, humane conduct	The empirical world (<i>drishya</i>), ultimately <i>mithya</i> (dependent appearance)	The objective physical universe (matter, energy, space, time)
Basic Structure	<i>Darshan-drishya-drishti</i> : right perspective sees the real scene and becomes holistic view	<i>Drig-drishya-viveka</i> : seer-seen discrimination negates the seen to reveal the witness	Subject-object modelling: observer builds public, testable models of objects/events
Is the World Real?	Yes. “Brahma is truth, the world is perpetual.”	Provisionally (<i>vyavaharika</i>), yes; absolutely (<i>paramarthika</i>), no.	Yes, for scientific realism and physicalism; methodologically, it is treated as publicly observable and law-governed.
Method of Knowing	Study, self-verification, realization-behavior-experiment, and evidence in conduct	Scripture (<i>shravana</i>), reasoning (<i>manana</i>), and meditation (<i>nididhyasana</i>)	Observation, experiment, mathematical modeling, prediction, and replication

Question	Madhyasth Darshan	Advaita Vedanta	Modern Science & Philosophy
Means of Valid Knowing	Study and realization (<i>anubhav</i>) as the ultimate <i>pramana</i> , proven by conduct and by the ability to impart it	Six <i>pramanas</i> , but <i>shabda</i> (revelation) alone reaches non-duality	Perception, inference, instrument-aided measurement; JTB analysis (contested since Gettier)
Account of Error	Delusion (<i>bhram</i>): identifying <i>jeevan</i> with the body; removable through understanding	<i>Khyativada</i> : <i>anirvacaniya</i> projection on Brahman, sublated by knowledge	Perceptual/cognitive bias and false belief, corrected by replication and peer review
Recent Modern Alternatives	Can be compared with MD's active <i>jeevan</i> , conduct-evidence, and awakened tradition	Can be compared with Advaita's witness and no-self tendencies	Predictive processing, enactivism, social epistemology, perspectival realism, illusionism, IIT/GNWT, and panpsychism
Status of Ethics	Humane conduct is part of complete knowledge and its evidence	Ethics purifies the mind and operates within provisional reality	Ethics is explained through evolution, psychology, social contract, or human values
Life's Purpose	Awakening: resolution, prosperity, harmony, and coexistence in society	Liberation (<i>moksha</i>): freedom from birth and death by realizing identity with Brahman	Biological survival, adaptation, and human-constructed meaning

Key Contrasts

- 1. Reality of the World:** Advaita Vedanta treats the world as *mithya* — provisionally valid but not absolutely real — to safeguard the absolute non-duality of Brahman. Madhyasth Darshan rejects this, asserting that both Brahma (Space) and the world (material and sentient units) are real: *Brahma satya, jagat nitya*. Modern science also affirms the reality of the physical world, but does not accept Space as omnipresent knowledge.
- 2. Two Different Seer-Scene Structures:** Advaita's *drig-drishya* method separates the seer from the seen and keeps negating the seen until only the actionless witness remains. Madhyasth Darshan's *darshan-drishya-drishti* structure asks whether the

human perspective can see the scene as coexistence and then evidence that understanding in conduct. Modern science treats the observer as a biological system that constructs public models of observable events.

3. **Active vs. Passive Knower:** In Advaita, the true Self is an actionless witness (*sakshi / akriya*). In Madhyasth Darshan, the knower (*jeevan*) is active, possessing structure, hope, thought, desire, evaluation, and the capacity for realization. In modern science, the knower is a dynamic, evolving biological system.
 4. **Knowledge Must Become Conduct:** In Madhyasth Darshan, *gyan* must unfold as *vivek* and *vigyan*, and then become evident through realization, behavior, and experiment. Advaita's highest knowledge culminates in liberation from mistaken identification. Modern science's knowledge culminates in predictive control, explanation, and replicable models.
 5. **The Status of Space:** In modern physics, space-time is a physical structure described mathematically. In Advaita, space (*akasha*) belongs to the order of appearance and is therefore *mithya*. In Madhyasth Darshan, Space (*shunya / vyapak*) is eternal, omnipresent, all-pervasive knowledge and energy itself, but not an individual conscious unit.
 6. **Where Recent Modern Views Come Closer to MD:** Predictive processing and enactivism make the knower active and embodied; social virtue epistemology makes knowledge socially maintained; perspectival realism makes knowledge perspective-dependent but not merely subjective. These partially resemble Madhyasth Darshan's active seer, conduct-evidence, and perspective structure. The decisive difference remains ontological: these modern views generally do not accept *jeevan* as a real, eternal sentient unit.
 7. **How Each Explains Valid Knowing and Error:** Madhyasth Darshan makes realization the ultimate proof and treats error as a *removable* misidentification of *jeevan* with the body. Advaita reserves ultimate competence for revelation (*shabda*) and treats error — and the world itself — as *anirvacaniya* appearance sublated by knowledge. Modern science trusts measurement and replication and treats error as bias or false belief, while conceding (since Gettier) that even “justified true belief” may not capture knowledge. The contrast is sharpest on mystery: MD claims it is fully eliminable, Advaita relocates it beyond the sayable, and science leaves it open.
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5. Critical Review

5.1 Madhyasth Darshan

- **Strengths:** It offers a realistic, positive framework that validates human relationships, ethics, and ecological balance as absolutely real. Its structure is unusually integrated: ontology (Space and units), epistemology (*darshan-drishya-drishti*), self-knowledge

(*jeevan*), practical wisdom (*gyan-vivek-vigyan*), and conduct are all tied to one evidence chain. It avoids Advaita's difficult task of explaining how a dependent world feels so real, and it avoids the "combination problem" of panpsychism by defining the self as a single, indivisible, constitutionally complete atom.

- **Weaknesses:**

- **Axiomatic Foundations:** The claim that "Space is Knowledge" is a metaphysical assertion that cannot be verified by physical measurement.
- **The Interaction Problem:** If the *jeevan* is a sentient atom operating through the body, the account needs a clearer bridge between *jeevan*'s signals and the brain's measurable neural processes. Madhyasth Darshan names the brain (*medhas*) as the receiver of *jeevan*'s signals, but this remains hard to reconcile with physical causal closure.
- **Falsifiability:** The system risks being unfalsifiable because any disagreement or failure to verify its claims is attributed to a "lack of awakening" rather than a possible error in the theory.
- **The Full-Knowability Thesis:** The claim that existence contains no permanent mystery and that right understanding yields *certitude* is unusually strong. A critic can ask how one could ever know that *all* of existence has been understood, and whether "certitude" is being guaranteed by definition rather than earned by inquiry.

5.2 Advaita Vedanta

- **Strengths:** It is highly rigorous and starts from the most undeniable fact of human existence: first-person consciousness itself. Its method of negating the observed to find the observer (*neti neti*) is a powerful introspective practice.
- **Weaknesses:**
 - **The Status of Ethics:** If the world and individuality are ultimately unreal (*mithya*), then ethical action and human suffering also have only provisional value. This makes it difficult to build a robust foundation for social and ecological responsibility.
 - **The Ignorance Paradox:** If only Brahman exists and is pure knowledge, where does the ignorance (*avidya*) that creates the illusion of the world come from? Advaita's explanation that ignorance is "indescribable" (*anirvacaniya*) is often criticized as a logical evasion — the same move used to explain a single perceptual error (rope-snake) is stretched to cover all of cosmic ignorance, which critics see as naming a mystery rather than resolving it.

5.3 Modern Science & Philosophy

- **Strengths:** It has delivered unmatched predictive power, medicine, and technology. Its self-correcting methodology of replication and peer review is the most successful system for eliminating subjective bias.
 - **Weaknesses:**
 - **The Hard Problem:** Science has failed to explain how objective, physical brain processes (like neurons firing) can produce subjective, qualitative experience (like seeing red or feeling love).
 - **First-Person Blindness:** By treating first-person subjective experience as something to be explained from the outside, science can understate the evidential importance of the very medium through which all observations are made.
 - **Fragmentation:** Recent philosophy of mind and consciousness science have many live but competing accounts — illusionism, panpsychism, predictive processing, enactivism, IIT, GNWT, higher-order theories, and others. This pluralism is intellectually healthy, but it also means modern philosophy has no unified answer to the knower-known-knowledge triad.
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6. References

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