

Physics of Nirvana: Link Two Realities

By Mani Bhaumik

The Vedas describe an ultimate reality, which they call Brahman. The awareness of this 'reality' is attained through the practice of yoga and meditation. "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman) — is the statement of this realisation and identification which is synonymous with the concept of *nirvana*. Conceptions of Brahman and *nirvana* are integral to the different schools of Indian and Buddhist philosophy. However, until recently, they had not been subject to scientific scrutiny.

Physicists have discovered that the various quantum fields, which underlie all physical reality, arise from one common source, namely, the unified field. Our goal here is to show an overall connection between two primary realities — the unified field and consciousness. To grasp all this, we need to understand the quantum world in a little more detail. Even the most sophisticated of scientific equipment does not allow us a glimpse of the natural realm of subatomic particles; we can only analyse it mathematically. On such microscopic scales of nature, particles and waves can exist simultaneously and inseparably. Quantum systems also display other bizarre behaviours, which physicists, in desperation, call quantum weirdness. For instance, a quantum particle can simultaneously be at more than one place or take more than one path.

John Wheeler and Roger Penrose, the foremost theorists about space and time, believe that the mysteries of consciousness and quantum physics are linked. Penrose insists that a universe whose laws do not take consciousness into account is not much of a universe. The theory that consciousness emerged as a natural consequence of the unique features of our universe has become a topic of much scientific discussion. It is called the anthropic cosmological principle. It proposes that the laws of nature are precisely crafted; otherwise, intelligent beings like us would not

have emerged to ask the question, 'Why are these laws so accurate?'

Quantum mechanically, the universe could have started in many possible ways. The evolution of conscious beings capable of comprehending its intricacies could be a prerequisite for the beginning of our universe.

It is ironic that our prized, objective knowledge of science is assembled through a subjective device — human consciousness. Yet some scientists consider it an epiphenomenon, implying that it is not a part of the primary reality. In quantum physics, consciousness could scarcely play a more pivotal role. No quantum phenomenon is a phenomenon until it is observed in a communicable form by a conscious observer. For example, a photon exists both as a wave and as a particle, but the individual property of a wave or a particle becomes manifest only when



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it is observed. The conviction of some that consciousness is an integral part of the nature of this universe is firmly based on the careful examination of the quantum nature of fundamental reality. The primary realities of the unified field and consciousness are inseparable aspects of the same underlying process, and they are united through mutual participation. Since the unified field permeates all manifest phenomena, so should its complementary aspect, consciousness.

According to our spiritual traditions, consciousness is not something that comes about merely through the functioning of neural connections in the brain, but is a basic characteristic of all reality, a spirit pervading all manifestations. The role of the human nervous system is to provide an appropriate material structure to individualise consciousness. In other words, we are the tuners of the all-pervading field of cosmic awareness. The discoveries of modern quantum physics seem, therefore, to parallel Vedic and Buddhist conjectures about the nature of reality.

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