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“Knowledge Is Power” – Is It Really?

Hella Naura

It is said that „Knowledge is power“. Well, yes and no. The knowledge about what one can possibly do to feel healthy, relaxed and contented would really mean much control over one’s life. Yet to have this knowledge, want to apply it, but be unable to do so – this would make for very dejecting feelings of powerlessness. What is meant here by “knowledge” is not the kind of professional knowledge that is required for pursuing a career. Nor is it any special “Yogic” knowledge. What is meant here is today’s often idle thirst for knowledge covering thousands of details all over the globe or today’s demands for “scientific” explanations for each and every thing. Such kind of knowledge might make for interesting conversations and discussions. But it would change nothing with regard to power or non-power, for the very reason that it usually remains practically without any factual consequences. So for knowledge to make life more fruitful, richer and easier, or more “powerful”, something else must be added to it.

And this “something else” would be the willpower required to really draw conclusions from one’s knowledge and convert them into actions. Or if not this, then desirable knowledge should be such that one can draw happiness or comfort out of it. With the above two short sentences, actually the three main functions of human life have been stated, i.e. knowing, willing as equal to acting and feeling.

Feeling:

It is increasingly accepted by the psychosomatic branch of medicine that emotions not only affect the momentary mood but also leave behind lasting impressions in the body, which can either make for illness or for health. Knowing this, one might feel motivated to observe one’s own emotions more carefully and to pay more attention to the emotional aspect of Yoga education. It is this aspect that aims at reducing negative emotions and strengthening positive emotions, such as faith, strength, enthusiasm, joy, friendliness, compassion, caring, peacefulness or gratefulness. It is a fact that Yoga can help to strengthen such good feelings; not at once, of course, but after a longer and rightly understood Yoga practice.

Knowledge:

One needs a certain degree of inner peace to recognise and henceforth know how negative - and therefore detrimental - or how positive - and therefore reinforcing - one’s emotions are. For that it is helpful to daily try to disconnect oneself from the humdrum of everyday life. This may be done in a meditation posture observing one’s breath as a help for keeping useless, distracted thinking down. Also “Reflection Practice” done in *Vajrasana* (if one cannot sit in it, then even sitting in a chair would do) is very helpful for knowing oneself better. And so are all the practices that are stated in Cyclopaedia III under *Jnana*, as one of the four positive *Bhavas* (edited by and published under Dr. Jayadeva Yogendra for “The Yoga Institute”, Santa Cruz East, Mumbai).

Willing:

As these practices would eventually help a person to recognise those of his own emotions, thinking patterns and habitual behaviour that make life difficult for him (and maybe for

others, too), he might want to change them for the better. Then the practice of *Tapa* (part of the threefold Kriya Yoga, according to Patanjali's "Yoga Sutra", Chapter 2, would help him to strengthen his willpower and thus transform himself step by step. With that, a feeling of inner strength could develop that is much more valuable than knowing a lot of a lot of this and that.

As some say: From knowing everything about one thing, modern times have changed to knowing everything about no thing.