

The Idea of 'Knowing' in the Johannine Literature

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INTRODUCTION

In the field of religion and philosophy, "knowledge" is the principal term used in relation to man's salvation. The aim of this article is to analyse the Johannine view of "knowledge" or "knowing". Since the study is done in relation to our Indian context, it is appropriate to open with an examination of the place of knowledge in the Hindu world-view.

Several terms are used for "knowledge" in Hindu philosophy, the commonest being *vidyā*, which means learning or science. The others are *jñāna* (contemplative knowledge), *prajñā* (spiritual understanding) and *saṃjñā* (comprehension).¹ The very name by which the sacred scriptures of the Hindus (the Vedas) have been known down the centuries is a term derived from the Sanskrit root *vid*, which means "to know" or "that which makes us know". This fact points out the importance which Hindu tradition has attached to the acquisition of right knowledge. The creation hymn in the *Rg Veda* (10, 129) suggests that vedic philosophy was clearly conscious of the difficulties involved in knowing the absolute cause of creation. This speculative interest manifested in the *Rg Veda* persists in other books of the *Veda* also, e. g. *Atharva Veda*, the *Brāhmaṇas* (Precepts), and the *Āraṇyakas* (Meditations). The question of the knowledge of the single source

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1. B. Walker, "Knowledge" *Hindu World*, London: George Allen & Unwin p. 555.

of multiplicity seems to be a strong undercurrent of the speculations of the *Atharva Veda*.

The evolution of the Hindu mind with regard to knowledge takes a new turn with the advent of the Upaniṣadic thinkers. The question of knowledge was always a puzzling problem for them. Authors identify two types of thinkers in connection with the *Upaniṣads*. Certain authors regard the philosophers of the early *Upaniṣads* as rational metaphysicians, whereas they regard those of the middle and late *Upaniṣads* as contemplative intuitionists.²

In the late philosophical system the very starting point of philosophical enquiry was the fact of illusory perception or ignorance. According to the school of Nyāya Vaiśeṣika, bondage (*samsāra*) consists in the cycle of birth-death-rebirth. Life is full of sorrow. The cause of sorrow is ignorance. *Nyāya Sūtra* (1, 1, 4) and *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* (1, 1, 4) state that the right knowledge is the means of attaining liberation (*Apavarga* or *Mokṣa*). Right knowledge consists in the discriminative knowledge of the Ātman

According to Sāṅkhya-yoga, bondage is traced to the operation of *Avidyā* or ignorance. The source of ignorance is imputed to the contact between *Puruṣa* (pure spirit) and *Prakṛti* (matter). Somehow, by ignorance, *Puruṣa* has fallen into *Prakṛti*'s bondage. Since bondage is a malady of understanding, it can be redressed only through knowledge.

One of the later philosophical schools that made a thorough examination of emancipating knowledge is *Advaita Vedānta*. The *Advaitin* offers the hypothesis of nescience (ignorance) on the part of the individual to account for the state of existence under bondage. Nescience consists in *Jivā*'s ignorance (*avidyā*) of its oneness with Brahman³. The study of the vedānta texts begins with a view to freeing oneself from wrong notions

2. K. N. Jayatilaka, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, London : George Allen and Unwin, 1963, p. 32.

3. Śankara Bhāṣya, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, pp. 108 & 143.

and attaining thereby the knowledge of the absolute unity of the self with the Supreme Being. Śaṅkara's system stands or falls upon the notion of inexplicable ignorance inherent in the embodied existence of the soul. The most fundamental need of the soul is to have its veil of ignorance lifted. Knowledge is treated in terms of removal of ignorance.

While Śaṅkara (*Advaitin*) asserted absolute identity between the Supreme Being and the individual soul, Rāmānuja (*Viśiṣṭādvaitin*) asserted relational identity, since he insisted that the oneness must be interpreted in terms of distinct entities. Although Rāmānuja cannot allow that the soul is identical with the Supreme Being, he frequently suggests their similarity of character. There are many qualities which the soul possesses in common with Brahman. Following the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta Sūtras*, Rāmānuja states that attributes like knowledge and truth are applicable to the Supreme Being and the individual soul ; but there is an important distinction. In the soul, the divine qualities can be obliterated or certainly obscured by the bondage to *karma*. The loss of Brahman-like character is real, and the realisation of the true nature of the soul is necessary and possible through devotional meditation. Release from the fetters of the influence of *karma*, and realisation of the true nature of the soul lead the individual to become like Brahman. So, knowledge is considered in terms of recovery of realisation lost through obliteration.

Besides Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, there is a third famous *Vedāntin* called Madhva. His system is recognized as radical dualism. The analogy most favoured by Madhva to describe the Brahman-soul relationship was that of original and reflection. The reflection is totally dependent on the original. Souls exist externally as reflections. Such is their essence. The utter dependence of the soul on the Lord is the ultimate truth to be revealed to the soul. This new knowledge of the dependence of the soul on the Supreme Being leads the soul to devotion. The fundamental ignorance of the soul concerns two basic realities, namely, the true nature of the soul (i. e., its dependence) and the

true nature of the Lord (i. e., its independence). Knowledge consists in the realization of this essence of the soul and the Lord.

Thus, it is seen in Indian religion and philosophy that knowledge is not treated merely as an epistemological factor, but is regarded as a basic element in the path to salvation, for knowledge can break the cycle of *saṃsāra* (birth-death-rebirth). "Though thou art of all sinners the most sinful, by the boat of knowledge alone shall thou pass over all crookedness", says Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad Gītā*.⁴ True knowledge is the knowledge of the eternal and of the *Ātman*. One must know what is to be avoided and also the means of avoiding error to attain *mokṣa* or salvation.

Even those who did not ascribe themselves to the metaphysical spoke of the liberation of the soul from the condition of its earthly existence. The Buddhist had the concept of *nirvāṇa* (release) and the Jains, the concept of *kaivalya*. The way of knowledge (*jñānamārga*) was the means for liberation. But, along with it, the way of action (*karmamārga*) and the way of of devotion (*bhaktimārga*) also became popular.

Both religion and philosophy in India took man as a soul (*ātman*) in bondage to ignorance. Being in the midst of worldly cares man fails to understand his own dignity and the freedom he is endowed with. Man seeks to free himself from bondage. Since bondage is due to ignorance, it can be dissolved only through knowledge.

Such is the view of knowledge in the Indian religious and philosophical world. In this context, it will be interesting to study how the Fourth Evangelist (John) interprets the verb 'to know' which is one of the motifs in the Johannine literature (Revelation excepted). One will find that John has much to say on the meaning of the term 'knowledge' which is of value to Indian readers.

4. W. D. P. Hill, *The Bhagavadgītā* IV : 36, London : Oxford University Press, 1928, p. 146.

I

THE CENTRALITY OF THE IDEA OF "KNOWING" IN THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE

The idea of *knowing* occupies a very important place in the Johannine literature. The idea is introduced in the Prologue of the Gospel (John 1 : 10, 18), indicating that it is one of the several key themes of the Gospel anticipated in 1 : 1—18. Then, at key points in the Gospel narrative, we meet this concept (e. g. , 4 : 42, 14 : 7, etc.). Finally, it is used to describe the actual meaning of salvation, the fundamental purpose of the Gospel, which is expressed in 20 : 30, 31. In a similar way, "to know" Jesus as Christ is the purpose of the First Epistle of John (I John 5 : 13, 20).

The centrality of the term "to know" may be estimated by observing both its literary and theological context.

(i) **Literary Centrality** : Simple verbs, *ginōskein* and *oida*, are used for the term 'to know' in the Johannine literature. The compound forms of both verbs are never used. Both verbs have no apparent difference in meaning, although the two verbs are frequently contrasted for stylistic purposes. For example, "If you had *known* (*egnōkeite*) me, you would have *known* (*ēideite*) my Father also ; henceforth you know (*ginōskete*) him and have seen him" (14 : 7). One more example can be quoted from 1 John 5 : 20 "And we *know* (*oidamen*) that the Son of God has come and, has given us understanding, to know (*ginōskomen*) who is true.....".

The verb *ginōskein* occurs about 55 times in the Fourth Gospel and 25 times in the three Johannine epistles. The verb *oida* occurs about 86 times in the Fourth Gospel and 16 times in the Epistles of John. Altogether, the term "to know" is used about 182 times in the Johannine literature. A term which is used with such a frequency is certainly of great signi-

ficance, Furthermore the occurrence of the term "to know" is more frequent in the Fourth Gospel, than in all Synoptics together. *Ginōskein* and *oīda* occur in the Synoptics about 135 times, whereas they occur about 141 times in the Gospel of John alone.

(ii) **Theological Centrality** ; The idea of knowing plays a key role in Johannine theology. The theological centrality of the term "to know" may be seen first from the purpose stated by John in the Fourth Gospel, and the First Johannine Epistle. In the Prologue (1 : 18), he makes it clear that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made God known to men. In 17 : 3 (cf. 20 : 30, 31) it is said, "And this is eternal life, that they know (*ginōskein*) thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." So also in 1 Jn. 5 : 13 (cf. 5 : 20) it is said, "I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know (*ēidete*) that you have eternal life."

John uses the term "to know" to bring out the deep theological meaning and significance of the revelation in the incarnation, life (words and deeds), death and resurrection of the historical Jesus. He calls men to know the deeper meaning of truth. The theological centrality of the term "to know" can be viewed under three aspects :

(a) God is known uniquely and finally through Jesus. John's claim is that God revealed himself in His Son, who is *the* historical Jesus. The following verses make his claim clear and unique. The central passages are 1 : 14, "And the Word become flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth ; *we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father*", and 1 : 18, "No one has ever seen God ; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he has made him known*" (cf. also 1 : 9 ; 3 : 16). Both these passages show the theological significance of the term "to know" in the revelation of God, even though neither *ginōskein* nor *oīda* is used in these verses. The word used is *exēgesato*. John's claim is that Jesus is the only one who shows what God is like.

(b) Jesus Christ is the *Revealer* of God in his ministry. The unique and final revelation of God is the historical Jesus. He reveals God in his incarnation, ministry (signs and discourses), life, death and resurrection, This is evident in 2 : 11 where, in the first sign Jesus manifests the glory of God ; and in 20 : 30, 31 John states that the purpose of writing this Gospel is that they might believe that the historical Jesus is the Son of God, who has revealed God or made Him known.

(c) A believing man comes to know God through Jesus of Nazareth. This means man on his part believes in the Revealer, and thereby appropriates to himself revelation. This idea is expressed clearly in 20 : 30, 31, and also 1 Jn. 5 : 20 where John says that man can have eternal life or salvation by believing in and knowing the historical Jesus as the Son of God who revealed God in his whole life. Once more John emphatically says : "And this is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent" (17 : 3).

The centrality of the term "to know" is recognized by many commentators. Bultmann says, "the simple verb *ginōskein* plays a bigger part in John and 1 John than in all the rest of early Christian literature...⁵. Barrett writes that the term "to know" is an important feature of the Johannine thought."⁶

5. R. Bultmann, "*Gnosis*", *The Bible Key Words* London : Adam and Charles Black, 1952, p. 45.

6. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, London : SPCK, 1955, p. 135.

II

THE MEANING OF THE IDEA OF "KNOWING" IN JOHANNINE THOUGHT

In the Gospel and Epistles, John repeatedly tells that many failed to know Jesus and God (1 : 10, 11), many misunderstood him, his works and words (3:2, 8,11 ; 4:10), but those who know the deeper spiritual meaning of the life and person of historical Jesus will have eternal life (17:3 ; 20:30, 31). Therefore, the term "to know" is of great significance right from the the Prologue ("the world knew him not" cf Jn 1 : 10) down to its purpose (know that Jesus is the Christ) cf. Jn. 20 : 31, 1 Jn. 5:13, 20.

The Prologue refers to the incarnation of the word (1:1—18), and the testimonies to the Incarnated word (1:19-51) ; then comes the 'Book of Seven Signs' where the 'New beginning' or 'Newness' which Christ brings is demonstrated by four incidents (2:1 to 4:42) ; from 4:43-6:71 the author tells that Jesus Christ is the 'Life-giving word' and 'Bread of Life' ; in chs. 7 and 8 the Way the 'True Light and 'True Life' are revealed and rejected is stated ; chs. 9 and 10 tell how the light judges the world in either way ; ch. 11 talks about the 'Victory of Life over Death', and ch. 12 about 'Life through Death'. The third main section of the Gospel is the 'Book of Passion' which narrates the Return of Jesus to the Father' (in chs. 13—20), followed by the Epilogue (ch. 21). Thus the Prologue, Book of Signs, and Book of Passion form a solid unity in the well-planned thought of John.

Some commentators have difficulty in relating the Prologue to the rest of the Gospel. This difficulty they feel because of the theories they put forward regarding the origin

and structure of the Prologue. However, Ridderbos⁷ along with others sees a natural relationship between the prologue and the rest of the Gospel. Lindars aptly remarks: "... the whole Gospel grows out of its own opening statements. The growth is like a flower but opening out and revealing more and more of its beauty and glory till the whole is revealed."⁸

It is characteristic of John to employ certain key words, such as 'Truth', 'Light', 'Glory', 'Life', etc., and their opposites. He uses these great words to show that their deepest fulfilment took place in the historical Jesus. This truth is visible only if history is understood from the side of faith.

These terms are also used in a dualistic sense. Bultmann is to be mentioned here for his existential understanding of the dualistic terminology.⁹ He firmly believes that the terminology is borrowed from Gnostic dualism and it became existential decision in the Johannine literature. But Barrett traces the origin of the Johannine key words to the Old Testament and Hellenistic Judaism.¹⁰

But, discoveries at Qumran revealed that the people there were aware of terminology and mode of expression similar to that found in John. This does not mean a direct dependence of one on the other. But it means most probably that John used a terminology which was common among all people. Therefore, Neill¹¹ and Higgins¹² rightly call the attention of those

7. H. Ridderbos, "The Structure and Scope of the Prologue to the Gospel of John", *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. VIII (1966, pp. 180 ff.

8. B. Lindars, *The Fourth Gospel: An Act of Contemplation*, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. by F. L. Cross, (London: Mowbery & Co., Ltd., 1957), p. 25.

9. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955 pp. 17 ff.

10. O. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPOK, 1957), p. 131.

11. S. Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 311 ff.

12. A. J. B. Higgins, *The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960), pp. 16f.

who seek the source of Johannine terminology outside of Palestine or Judaism to the fact of Qumran parallels. This type of terminology was intelligible even to the Hellenistic people. Perhaps, John was careful and wise to choose a universal terminology common to both Judaism and Hellenism.

The important ideas which are present in the Fourth Gospel are continued in the Johannine epistles. In the epistles, the leading ideas of the Gospel are related to the life of Christians. Continuing the Gospel ideas, the Johannine epistles maintain the same tension between history and faith which the Gospel maintains. At the beginning of 1 John itself, the attention of the reader is drawn to this tension. It says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest . . .so that you may have fellowship....." (1 Jn. 1:1—3). The same tension is seen in the conclusion of the Epistle (cf. 1 Jn. 5:20).

A close look at the purposes of the Fourth Gospel and of 1 John reveals that the leading ideas of the Gospel are to be continued in the Epistles of John. In John 20 : 31, it says, " ...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in his name." 1 John 5 : 13 runs : "I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life". (cf. also 1 Jn. 5 20).

The word "Life" or "Eternal Life" (both in noun and verbal forms) occurs about 14 times in the First Epistle of John — 1 : 1,2 ; 2 : 25 ; 3 : 14,15 ; 4 : 9 , 5 11, 12, 13, 16, 5 : 20 (In verses underlined, "to know" is explicitly related to the word, "life"). The idea, Light (*Phos*) occurs in 1 Jn. 1 : 5, 7, 2 : 8, 9,10, 11 (these verses imply the idea "to know". cf. 2 : 12). Even though the word "glory" does not appear in the epistles, its manifestation is talked about in them (cf. Jn. 1 : 1 ff, 5 : 20, where "glory" and "to know" are

closely related). The word "Truth" is frequently used, and occurs in all the Johannine epistles. 1 Jn. 2 : 8, 3 : 19, 4 : 6, 5 : 6, 20. II Jn. 1 : 1, 2, 3, 4 ; III Jn. 1 : 3,4,8, 12 (Those underlined verses emphasize the idea "to know" in relation to "truth").

Here one has to take note of certain things : First of all, the Gospel themes are continued in the epistles. Secondly, the Johannine idea "to know" is associated closely with almost all the leading ideas, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly. The idea "to know" penetrated into the Johannine characteristics, and thus into the unity and development of thought. Lastly, the term "to know" plays a major role in understanding the tension between history and faith in the Johannine literature.

III

THE TWO SIDES OF KNOWLEDGE

This leads to the study of the development of this tension in respect of the two sides of the idea of "knowing", namely,

- (i) Jesus as the Revealer (i. e., its revelatory content), and
- (ii) Man as the Knower (i. e., his decision and response).

(i) Jesus the Revealer :

In the Johannine theology, revelation occupies an important place and it is centred on Jesus. Revelation is a gracious act of God. God revealed himself through the incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection of his only begotten Son, namely the historical Jesus : "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14). The uniqueness of revelation is expressed by John himself : "No one has ever seen God ; the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him *known* (1:18). Scott¹³ remarks : "The answer to Philip at the supper may be regarded as the central theme of the whole Gospel : 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' Jesus himself is the revelation, and according as men know him, through a living fellowship, they attain to the knowledge of God" (14:8-11 ; 17:1—15).

Thus, John emphatically brings out that Revelation is a gift of God in Jesus Christ who, in turn, reveals God in his person and life. It is a unique revelation surpassing all other claims of revelation. Jesus reveals God and John expresses this in terms of (a) life, (b) light, (c) glory and (d) truth. At the

13. E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel : Its Purpose and Theology* (Edinburgh : T & T Clark, 1908), p. 210.

same time, John brings home that Jesus himself is true life, light, glory and truth, and imparts them to the believer. Let us briefly consider the content of revelation, before we discuss the response of man, the Knower.

(a) Revelation in terms of Life (*Zoe*) :

Scott remarks : "The Fourth Gospel opens with the great thesis : 'In him was life'. It closes with the emphatic statement of its main purpose, 'that believing, you may have life through his name'.¹⁴ These two verses may be regarded as the poles between which the whole thought of the Gospel revolves.

A brief list of occurrences shows that revelation in historical Jesus is life. 'In him was life' (1:4 ; 'as the Father has life in himself; so he has granted his Son also to have life in himself' (5:26) ; He has words of eternal life. He is the life (14:6). He is the giver of life (4:14 ; 7:18) ; He is the Bread of life (6:35, 51, 53) cf. 15:4 ; He is the light of the world. One who follows him will have the light of life(cf. also 5:21;8 : 51 ; 10:28 ; 11:25).

(b) Revelation in terms of Light :

In the beginning of the Prologue itself 'life' is identified with 'light' (1:4). This light is Jesus. John the Baptist bore witness to that light (1:7, 8, cf. 5:35). It was the light of truth which gives knowledge to every man (1:9). The light judges those who accept or reject Jesus or revelation (3:19—21). One of the 'I am' sayings reveals that the revelation is light : 'I am the light of the world.'

(c) Revelation in terms of Glory :

Another characteristic word used to express the revelation of God in and through the Logos which became flesh is "glory". The first sign at Cana is an example of the Johannine concept that Jesus manifested his glory in his works (2 : 11). Cross and

14. Scott, *ibid.*, p: 234.

death are the climax of the manifestation of the glory of God (13 : 31, 32 ; 12 : 16, 23, 28 ; 21 : 19). The whole ministry of Jesus manifested the glory of God (17 : 4).

(d) Revelation in terms of "Truth" :

Truth is another Johannine term used very frequently. He uses *alēthēs*, *alēthinos*, *alētheia*, and *alēthos* for truth. Strachan,¹⁵ Dodd¹⁶ and others feel that the Hellenistic background influenced John in adopting the word "truth". In Hellenistic circles it means real or genuine. But Barrett¹⁷ believes differently arguing that the word "truth" shows the influence of the Hebrew background. God, who is only true in the sense He is faithful and real (17 : 3) revealed Himself in the historical Jesus (1 : 14), and therefore, Jesus is the Truth (14 : 6). Barrett says : "It is the saving truth (8 ; 32) (which challenges every man), and it is perceived only through the work of the Holy Spirit".¹⁸ The word "truth" does not convey any abstract philosophical meaning, but concrete incarnate and historical Jesus : "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth". (Jn. 1 : 14).

There is a tension between fact and interpretation, history and faith. The historical act of God in Jesus Christ is central, but interpreted in non-literalistic or symbolical setting. Such a maintenance of tension can be seen in our analysis of the idea of knowing also.

(ii) Man, the Knower :

Is the true knowledge of faith purely historical or purely existential ? Or is it both ?

15. R. H. Strachan, *The fourth Gospel : Its Significance and Environment* (London : SCM Press Ltd., 1958), p. 184.

16. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, (Cambridge : University Press, 1955), p. 177.

17. O. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London : SPCK, 1955), p. 139.

18. *Ibid.*

At every stage of the Gospel, John narrates the facts and uses the words in such a way as to show that man is confronted by God in Jesus. This confrontation calls for a decision on the part of man either to accept or reject Jesus. This aspect of existential decision is certainly present in the Fourth Gospel, as Bultmann claims. Therefore, the whole Gospel—its purpose, words, and theology—is understood and interpreted existentially by Bultmann.¹⁹ He believes “that Jesus as the Revealer of God reveals nothing but that he is the Revealer”. This is the extreme of his existential interpretation. He does not care for the content of revelation. Bultmann very rightly made the revealed knowledge of God in Jesus relevant to modern man. But he appears to do this at the expense of the historical context of revelation, as Manson²⁰ alleges. It must be insisted that John’s concept of Revelation is rooted in the concrete historical event of the incarnation.

Existentialism, which discards the historical aspect of the narratives as unimportant, runs the risk of becoming gnostic or docetic in character. John was cautious about this danger when he wrote the Gospel and Epistles. Hence, in the Prologue itself he declares, “the word became flesh” so as to avoid such a gnostic or docetic risk. The Johannine concern for history is reflected all through his narratives. Therefore, the revealed knowledge is grounded in and through a historical man, Jesus, who at the same time is Christ, the Son of God. The existential nature of knowledge is inseparable from its historical content. Hence the existential nature of knowledge is to accept the historical Jesus in faith. Thus the revealer who is Jesus Christ becomes personal, historical and non-speculative through existentialism.

19. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London : S.C.M Press Ltd., 1955), II.

20. T. W. Manson, *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (Manchester : University Press 1962), p. 248.

of, also J. Macquarrie, *An Existential Theology* (London : SCM Press Ltd. Ltd., 1960), p. 23.

If there is tension between history and faith in the revelation, there is a similar tension in the concept "to know" between historical and existential aspects, between event and interpretation. The historical Jesus, as the revealer of God, confronts man. The confrontation calls for a decision on the part of man either to accept or reject Jesus. Thus, man in his response to the revelation becomes the knower. John explains the meaning of the idea "to know" in terms of (a) believing, (b) seeing, (c) obeying, (d) loving and (e) abiding.

Let us deal with them in succession :

(a) Knowing and Believing :

The terms "to know" and "to believe" are very significant terms for John. Like *gnōsis*, *Pistis* as a noun is consciously avoided with the exception of 1 Jn. 5 : 4. But, the verbal form "to believe" is frequently used for "to know".

What is the relation of these terms in Johannine theology ? It is a difficult question to answer. There are two opinions among scholars. Barrett,²¹ Bultmann,²² Gaffney,²³ and others think that the two terms are synonymous. But, Richardson,²⁴ Scott,²⁵ and Gartner,²⁶ along with others believe that they are not synonymous. Barrett argues that both terms occur synonymously in 17 : 8 ; (11 : 42 ; 17 : 8, 21 cf. with 17 : 3 ; 16 : 27-30 with 7 : 17) : 11 . 27 and 20 : 31 with 6 : 69. Sometimes *Pisteuein* comes first (5 : 69 ; 8 : 31 f ; 10 : 38), and at other times it is found in the reverse order (17 ; 8 : 16 : 30 ;

21. O. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London : SPOK, 1955), p. 253.

22. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London : SCM Press, 1955), II, 74.

23. J. Gaffney, "Believing and Knowing in the Fourth Gospel" *Theological Studies*, 26 (1965), p. 241.

24. A. Richardson, *The Gospel according to St. John : Introduction and Commentary* (London : SCM Press, 1959), p. 45.

25. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 271.

26. Gartner, "Pauline and Johannine Idea of 'to Know God' against the Hellenistic Background". *New Testament Studies* 14 (67-68), p. 226.

1 Jn. 4 : 16), ²⁷ Richardson and others believe in the distinction of the two terms with slight edge, believing resulting in Knowing. However, they admit that the two terms "are fully complementary". ²⁸

In general, both groups admit the close relationship of the two terms (6 : 69). Bultmann remarks "Faith and knowledge... cannot be distinguished as two stages...". Knowledge cannot cut loose from faith and soar on out beyond it ; faith, however, also contains knowledge—faith itself knows. Since for John all knowing can only be a knowing in faith, knowing is a structural aspect of believing. In this sense each aspect builds upon the other.

The content of believing or Knowing is neither the awareness of the historical information of the life of Jesus, nor believing or knowing the mere fact that Jesus is the Revealer, and nothing more as Bultmann believes, but it contains more than these elements and is much deeper. The deeper meaning of the content is expressed in such passages as—"Unless you *believe* that I am he" (8 : 24 ; 13 : 19) ; "they may *believe* that thou didst send me" (11 : 42 ; 17 : 8,21) ; "*believe* in the light" (12 : 36) ; "He who *believes* in me, *believes* not in me but in him who sent me" (12 : 44) ; "*Believe* me that I am in the Father and the Father in me" (14 : 11). ²⁹ Therefore, the whole person, work and words of Jesus are involved when it is said of the content of "to believe" or "to know" (20 : 30,31).

Faith demands action (6 : 29 ; 12 : 36 ; 1 Jn 3 : 23). Man believes and knows the revelation of Jesus as Christ. He may also reject the revelation. Here comes the existential decision either to accept or to reject the revelation.³⁰ The believer or man as the knower of revelation is granted eternal life

27. Scott., *op. cit.*, p. 271.

28. *Ibid.*

29. R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel*, Ed. C. F. Evans (Oxford : University Press, 1960), p. 26.

30. E. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London : S.C.M. Press, 1955), II, p. 70.

(20 : 31 ; 17 : 3 ; 3 : 16 ; 3 : 36 cf. also 6 : 35, 40,47 ; 7 : 37 f ; 11 : 25 f ; 12 : 44-48 ; 14 : 12 ; 1 Jn. 5 : 1, 10,13,20), and he is granted the power to become the child of God (1 : 12).

(b) Knowing and Seeing

John uses *horan*, *idein*, *ophsesthai*, *blepein*, *theisthai* and *theorein* for "seeing" synonymously. Just as knowing and believing are related, so also knowing and seeing.

Their meaning is interchangeable : ³¹ "We have beheld his glory" (1 : 14) ; "And he who sees me sees him who sent me" (12 : 14 ; cf. also 6 : 40 ; 14 : 9 and many other passages). Some times the word "to see" means more than its surface meaning, and points to a deeper truth. "Come and see" passages also show that "to see" is equal to "to know" (1 : 39, 46 ; 4 : 29)

Almost all scholars agree that the Johannine term "to see" is a faith seeing of the "truth", "life" and "light" of the historical Jesus. They also agree that the term "to know" and "to see" overlap one another in their meaning (14 : 7,9,17 ; 1 Jn. 3 : 6 etc.). But Bultmann differs here, and argues that the equation of knowing and seeing is not Jewish but arises from the influence of Gnostic or Hellenistic understanding.³² Richardson criticizes Bultmann for ignoring that such an equation of knowing and seeing is common religious language anywhere at any time. He further remarks : "To claim that because St. John occasionally uses language about "seeing", he, therefore, starts from the Gnostic conception of Knowledge is to admit the necessity of manufacturing evidence out of nothing. Richardson claims that the Old Testament is full of "such imagery".³³

John rules out any direct vision of God. He claims that no one has ever seen God except Jesus, Son of God (1 : 18).

31. cf. Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. 47

32. Bultmann, "Gnosis", *op. cit.*, p.48.

33. Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

The faith-knowing-vision of God is granted only in Jesus : "And he who sees me sees him who sent me." (12 : 45), cf. also 14 : 8 ff. Quite rightly, the disciples beheld the glory of God in Jesus (the Word which became flesh). Therefore, Knowing and seeing (through the eye of faith) are identical in their meaning. The Johannine writings are written with the knowledge of the deeper truth which they have seen with the eye of resurrection faith.

(c) Knowing and Obeying :

Knowing God, in Biblical thought, is possible only through active personal relationship of man with God. This kind of personal experience comes into force only when man willingly obeys the will of God. It is a kind of hearing faith which means to obey the word of God. Jesus himself obeyed the will of God and, therefore, he spoke and did according to the will of God. Jesus knew God because he perfectly obeyed his Father. In a similar way, the believer also knows God by hearing or by obeying the words of Jesus in and through whom God's will is manifested. Thus, the Johannine idea of obedience is essentially an Old Testament idea.

The purpose of the Gospel is to make one believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The Father-Son relationship is biblical and unique.³⁴ John points out precisely the relationship which man ought to recognize, in 20 : 31 "but , these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God...". In this Father-Son relationship, obedience is demonstrated. Jesus obeyed his Father's will at all times : "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work " (4 : 34) ; "I always do what is pleasing to him" (8 : 29 cf. also 10. 36-38 ; 5 : 30 ; 6 : 38 ; 17 : 4). Thus, Jesus' Knowledge of God comes from his perfect obedience to the will of God in his life.

So also believers, being the sons of God, should obey the will of God unconditionally by hearing and obeying the

34. Richardson, *op. cit.* p. 152

words of Jesus. This personal relationship is based on obedience and involves the motive of love. Such a Father-Son relationship based on obedience and love is itself the knowledge of God.

Hence, John explicitly associates knowing and obeying in his writings. Jesus says, "I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say therefore I say as the Father has bidden me" (12 : 50 ; 7 : 17 ; 8 : 55). To the Jewish believers Jesus says, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples..." (8 : 31), and they will know the truth which will set them at liberty from the bondage of sin (8 : 32), (cf., also 8 : 43, 17 : 8). The terms knowing and obeying occur together clearly in 1 Jn. 2 : 3-5 ; "And by this we may be sure that we know him' if we keep his commandments. He who says : 'I know him' but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him ; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected".

(d) Knowing and Loving :

The Johannine idea of "knowing" is further associated with the concept of love which is the characteristic of obedience to God.³⁵ It is also one of the major terms used to express not only the abstract quality of God but His very nature and being.³⁶ Especially in 1 Jn. 4 : 7-8, it is explicitly stated. The love of God for humanity is manifested in Jesus Christ the Son of God who obeyed the will of God in coming into and living in the world. The believer who is saved by the love of God is inspired by the divine love in Jesus, responds to God in love, and at the same time loves his fellowmen spontaneously in his ethical relationship.³⁷ The mutual love of God to man, and man to God in and through Jesus is called the basis for knowledge of God (3 : 16 ; 3 : 35 ; 14 : 31 ; 11 : 5 ; 14 : 51).

35. Cf. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London : SPCK, 1965), p. 383.

36. Cf. A.E. Brooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Johanne Epistles* (ICC) (Edinburgh : T & T Clark, 1912). p. 118.

37. Cf. Howard, *Christianity according to St. John* (London : Duckworth, 1943), pp. 168 f.

It is thought that *philein* and *agapan* are not synonymous. Bernard believes that John uses these two words synonymously to express the idea of "love."³⁸ The main purpose of Johannine writings is to state that "knowing" God is equivalent to "knowing" His love in Jesus for humanity. E. K. Lee notes how this concept, "love", dominates the whole Johannine writings. He says, "The great unifying idea is that God is love: The whole of John's theology and ethics are based upon this fact which he learned through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is this that gathers all the varied details of Johannine thought into the whole. "God so loved that he gave" is the heart of Johannine conception of God".³⁹

In the preceding section, it was discussed how knowing and obedience are related to each other. Here obedience and love are related to knowing in the background: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word" (14 : 23); *cf.*, also 14 : 15; 1 Jn. 3 : 23; 4 : 20). Hence, Bultmann concludes: "Keeping his commandments" is the means of deciding whether we "know" him or not (1 Jn. 2 : 3-6).⁴⁰

It is proper to conclude this section with Johannine words which show clearly the relationship of knowing and love. "Beloved, let us *love* one another; for *love* is of God, and he who *loves* is born of God and knows God. He who does *not love* does *not know* God; for God is love. In this, the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 Jn. 4 : 7ff).

38. J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, ICC, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1953), pp. 702 ff.

39. E. K. Lee, *The Religious Thought of St. John* (London: SPOK 1950) pp. 258 ff.

40. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: S. C. M. Press Ltd., 1955), II, 80.

(e) **Knowing and Abiding (Fellowship) :**

The vital relationship between God and man is expressed by John in the concept of fellowship. This concept is often misunderstood as Johannine mysticism. Barrett rejects this view rightly because the Johannine concept of fellowship or communion differs in many respects from mysticism.⁴¹

Unlike in mysticism, in the Johannine idea of fellowship, God remains as God and man remains as man.

Man separated himself from the fellowship with God by his sinful rebellion. Since then, he has been walking in the darkness. God invites him to come back into his fellowship, or eternal life which man has lost. The barrier of sin which separates man from God is finally broken down by God's sending His own Son, Jesus, out of His love for man.⁴² Christ, being the revealer of God and His love, becomes the mediator for fellowship between man and God. Direct Knowledge, or man's deification, or his absorption into God, which are mystical elements, are totally denied by John when he states that no one has ever seen God except the Son, Jesus, whom He has sent (1 : 18). Man can have fellowship with God only by having fellowship with Jesus who is always in fellowship with God, the Father. This mutual fellowship which was made possible through divine love is further expressed in man's fellowship with others. The Church, which is the body of Christ and communion of saints, has such ideal fellowship based on love.⁴³ The fellowship between man and man is ethical in character, because of the divine love which constitutes it.

Throughout such fellowship between man and God (in and through Jesus), man remains man and God remains God, unlike in the proper mysticism of other religions. His fellowship

41. O. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London : SPOK, 1955), p. 71.

42. W. F. Howard, *Christianity According to St. John* (London : Duckworth, 1943), pp. 98 f.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

is not *static* but *dynamic* in character. Jesus has the fellowship of the Father by obeying and living according to the will of God ; and similarly, man obeys and lives according to the will of Jesus and thereby the will of God ⁴⁴ The Johannine passages which express this mutual fellowship are to be understood and interpreted in this sense only.

Jesus' fellowship with the Father is mentioned in 10 : 30 ; "I and the Father are one" (cf. also 5 : 18). The fellowship of Jesus with the Father becomes the basis for man's fellowship with Jesus and through him with God (17 : 20-26). The abiding of the believer in Christ is well pictured in the allegory of the vine and its branches (15 : 1-6) : "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him..." (15 : 5 ; cf., also 14 : 23 ; 14 : 17). This is also reciprocal fellowship. Furthermore, the believers ought to live in fellowship with one another, because it shows that they have fellowship with God : "Love one another as I have loved you." (15 : 12) ; cf. also 1 Jn. 2 : 9 ; 3 : 24 ; 4 : 13, 16).

Then, what is the relationship between Knowing and fellowship ? It is already noted in the preceding sections that to know God is to have personal relation or experience with Him. Therefore, it is obvious that true knowledge of God consists in the true dynamic personal fellowship with Jesus Christ who is in constant fellowship with God. This reciprocal fellowship is seen in the ethical life of the believers, which is guided by the divine love. Dodd is right when he remarks that the true fellowship is the true knowledge of God which is "eternal life".⁴⁵ John himself addresses the believers saying this truth : "And we *know* that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to *know* him who is true, and we *are in him* who is true, in his son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn. 5 : 20 and Jn. 17 : 3).

44. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge : University Press, 1955), p. 194.

45. *Ibid* p. 187, cf. also See; *op. cit.* p. 202.

The above examination shows that God revealed Himself in and through the life and ministry of the historical Jesus. His Son Jesus, manifests this revelation, giving man an opportunity to know God and have eternal life. The Johannine purpose is also to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. John sees this deeper meaning in history through the resurrection-faith and invites man to know God in and through Jesus. To this end, John talks about Jesus as Revealer, and man as Knower. To achieve his purpose, John uses a common terminology understandable both to the Jews and others. But, his expressions carried basically the Jewish thought, and became unique having Jesus as their content. Therefore, man knows God by his personal response, by believing in Jesus, by seeing with the eye of faith, by obeying the will of God, by recognizing and reflecting on the love of God, and by having living fellowship with God and having ethical relationship with his fellow men. Thus, "to know" God is a very important concept in John, which lies behind all other concepts. According to John, "knowing God" means "experiencing eternal life or salvation".

CONCLUSION

In the introductory part of this article it was observed that "knowledge" is treated in Indian religion and philosophy as a basic element in the path to salvation, for knowledge can break the cycle of *Samsāra* (birth-death-rebirth). Man is generally considered a soul in bondage. Being in the midst of worldly cares, man fails to understand his own dignity and freedom he is endowed with. Man seeks to free himself from bondage. Since bondage is due to ignorance, salvation can take place only through knowledge, e. g., knowledge of the absolute cause of creation (*Rg Veda*), knowledge of oneness with Brahman (*Advaita Vedānta*), knowledge of the true nature of the soul (*Viśiṣṭādvaita*), and the knowledge of the essence of the soul and the Lord (Radical dualism). Salvation is considered in terms of release from earthly life subject to the cycle of births resulting from ignorance.

The following is a summary of this article's analysis of the Johannine idea of "knowing".

The first section of the article dealt with the literary and theological centrality of the idea of "knowing". The second section of the article concerned itself with the meaning of the idea of "knowing" God or Jesus Christ, and showed that "knowing" issues in eternal life or salvation according to St. John. The third section had to do with the two sides of knowledge, namely, the Revealer and the Knower. According to John, knowledge is a gift of God in Jesus Christ, because there is no direct or immediate knowledge of God (Jn. I : 18). Jesus reveals God in his person and life, in terms of life, light, glory and truth. At the same time, John brings home to the readers that Jesus himself is the true life, light, glory and truth. While Jesus is portrayed as the revealer through the historical act of his

incarnation, man is depicted as the knower who is called upon to take a decision in response to the revelation. John explains the idea of knowing in terms of believing, seeing, obeying, loving and abiding. Man gets to know God by his personal response, by believing in Jesus, by seeing with the eye of faith, by obeying the will of God, by recognizing and reflecting on the love of God, by having living fellowship with God, and by having ethical fellowship with fellow men and women. Thus "knowing" God is a very important concept in Johannine literature, and it lies behind all other concepts "To know" God amounts to experience of eternal life or salvation, according to John.

Since this study has been done against the background of Indian religion and philosophy, it is necessary to make a few comments on the hermeneutical problem which the Johannine idea of "to know" poses in the Indian context. The idea of 'knowing' in terms of "abiding in Christ" has become a thorny problem. The affinity between the Fourth Gospel and India was the alleged pattern of spirituality or mysticism. This has been problematic. It may be recalled how A. J. Appasamy dealt with this problem in his book *Christianity as Bhaktimārga* (1926). He argued against the mystical approach to the Gospel according to John, and explains that a study of the Johannine writings makes it clear that the great goal of knowledge is eternal life, i.e. a life lived in union with Christ on the basis of the text: "And this is life eternal, that they know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (Jn 17:3).⁴⁶ He pointed out that eternal life manifests itself in our loving relationships with one another.

Furthermore, in his book, *The Johannine Doctrine of Life* (1934), A. J. Appasamy noted that life in God is a positive experience, and it is continuous contact with the Supreme reality. It resembles the life of Jesus with God. Life in God does not mean realization of identity with God, but experience of a moral

46. A. J. Appasamy, *Christianity as Bhakti Marga* (Madras: C. L. S., 1926), pp. 227f.

harmony with the holy and righteous Father, resulting in ethical and loving relationship with fellow-men and women ⁴⁷

John himself may have taken into account several movements existing in his time, e. g., Hellenism, Gnosticism, and the Mystery religions which consisted of elements of emotionalism, intellectualism and magic in relation to the idea of "knowledge". Though John uses the terminology and thought patterns of Hellenistic mysticism, he does so in order to present in an apologetic way the uniqueness of Christian concept of knowledge against the Hebraic background. He shows his contemporaries how their epistemology has to be modified to make sense religiously. ⁴⁸ Similarly, every Indian reader will have to take care to see the relevance of the Gospel of John. In this connection, it is appropriate to make reference to a recent ecumenical seminar held in Pune in February, 1974 which made a study on the message of St. John's Gospel to India today, and thereafter brought out a book, entitled *India's Search for Reality and The Relevance of the Gospel of John* (1975), containing sixteen papers read at the seminar, representing almost all possible approaches to the Gospel.

It is neither possible nor necessary to deal with all of the papers here, but it is worthwhile to refer briefly to three papers which give a glimpse of various approaches to the idea of "knowing" in the Gospel according to St. John.

Firstly, M. A. Amal Doss in his paper, "An Indian Reads St. John's Gospel", approached the Gospel in the radiant light of the *Upaniṣads* basing his presentation on the Indian spirituality of the *Upaniṣads*. ⁴⁹ Amal Doss saw the emphasis in an apparent mystical union with God in a more or less cognate process. He

47. A. J. Appasamy, *The Johannine Doctrine of Life* (London : SPCK, 1934), p. 6.

48. O. A. Piper, "Knowledge", *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, (N. Y. : Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 45.

49. M. A. Amal Doss, "An Indian Reads St. John's Gospel", *India's Search for Reality and the Relevance of the Gospel of John* (Delhi : ISPOK, 1975), pp. 16f.

pointed out the apparent absolute unity between the Son and the Father. He said that Jesus, at the same time, can both pray to the Father and consecrate himself to the Father (17:19). This is really the mystery of the *Advaita*. He pointed out that we can speak of a similar *advaita* relationship between the believer and the Son, and in the Son, with the Father, on the basis of the text : "May they also be in us, just as you are in me and I in you". (17:21).

It is important to note that Amal Doss was far from considering Hindu spirituality and Christian faith as identical. At every stage, he pointed out the difference. The theme of unity, according to the Gospel, is related to a life of communion of the believers. That is the reality of the Church. Thus we see that Amal Doss approached the Gospel from the standpoint of the Indian spiritual heritage. It is an apologetic approach to the Gospel defending its relevance against Hindu mystics.

Secondly, reference may be made to another participant in the seminar C Duraisingh, who approached the Gospel from an opposite point of view, laying emphasis on the union with God in the area of decision and commitment in the context of social change and modernity.⁵⁰ He regretted that Indian Christian spirituality has often interpreted the Fourth Gospel in an advaitic, non-historical manner. Actually, the historical dimension in St. John is to be taken very seriously. On the basis of the text : "The hour is coming and now is" (4:23 ; 5:25), Duraisingh pointed out that the activity of Christ is in the present, here and now, and yet it cannot be reduced to a static present. The promise is already being fulfilled, but is being fulfilled in such a way as to look forward to a dynamic and continuous fulfilment in the future also. To his mind, fight against injustice and corruption draws inspiration from the great controversial chapters in John (chs. 6-8) where John portrays Jesus as one whose words, deeds and very being polarised people and led him to the cross.

50. C. Duraisingh, "The Gospel of John and the world of India Today" *India's Search for Reality and the Relevance of the Gospel of John* (Delhi ISPOK, 1975), p. 44.

Of course, there was a feeling expressed in the course of the discussion that ensued that this kind of secular interpretation of the Gospel leaves very little room for transcendence and prayer, yet this is an apologetic approach to defend the relevance of the Gospel to the quest of social justice, as well as the relevance of the knowledge and vision of God to loving and social relation between Father and Son, and Christ and his people.

Thirdly, G. Soares Prabhu presented an exegesis of the story of the man born blind (John 9 : 1-41). According to him, the story could be understood in the line of the philosophical distinction which is found in the Indian tradition, in terms of this-worldly (*vyāvahārika*) and the heavenly reality (*pāramārthika*)⁵¹. But, he pointed out that this interpretation is misleading. Soares Prabhu stated that in the light of Jesus' answer to the Pharisee in 9 : 41, (If you were blind then you would not be guilty, but since you say "we can see" your guilt remains), the dualism consists not in terms of two levels of reality, but in two kinds of decision in response to revelation. The blind who are destined to see are those who decide for Jesus, because they are conscious of their blindness and of their need for Jesus. The point of the story is that the call of Jesus is to know that we do not know, and to step out in order to see the light in the encounter with the Christ.

From the foregoing, it is evident that in our multicultural and multireligious setting in India, we are bound to come up with a variety of puzzling experiences of the idea of 'knowing' in our effort to contextualize the Gospel according to St. John. Yet from the present survey a couple of facts are clear : First, although the expression "to know" in terms of "abiding in Christ" is subject to mis-interpretation as mystical union with God in a cognitive process, the present study demonstrates that it relates to living and dynamic fellowship with God, God, remaining as God and man remaining as man.

51. G. Soares Prabhu, "The Man Born Blind : Understanding a Johannine Sign in India Today", *India's Search for Reality and the Relevance of the Gospel of John*, (Delhi : ISPOK 1975), p. 75.

Secondly, although there is a reference to dualism in relation to the idea of "knowing", the present study shows that the theme of dualism in John is placed in the light of the coming judgement. This dualism is between the realm of truth, light, and life and the realm of untruth, darkness, and death. Those, who believe in Jesus belong to the realm of truth and light, and they have life. Knowing Jesus is to pass from untruth to truth, darkness to light, and from death to life. One would discover in the person of Jesus, the truth, the light, and the life. All this would be familiar to a Hindu who is accustomed to saying the following prayer :

"Lead me from the untruth to the truth,
Lead me from darkness to light,
Lead me from death to life." ⁵²

Finally, "knowing" in John's Gospel represents eternal life which is very significant in the Indian context. While the Gospel of John insists on the wholistic character of the notion of life, it is striking that it is not elaborated very much in Hindu religiosity. "Knowledge" in John is not conceived as release from the earthly life subject to the cycle of births resulting from ignorance. On the other hand, in John, "knowledge" constitutes experience of eternal life or abundant life which is both realized and futuristic, and it manifests itself in living and loving fellowship with God and neighbour. God revealed himself in and through the life and ministry of the historical Jesus, His son, who gives man an opportunity to know God and have eternal life. To this end, John portrays Jesus as the Revealer and man as the Knower of God's dealings with the world.

52. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.3.28.