



# SCIENCE & SPIRITUAL QUEST

BHAKTIVEDANTA INSTITUTE

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आ नौ भद्राः कर्तवो यन्तु विश्वतोऽर्द्ध्यासो अर्परीतास उद्भिदः । (RgVeda) *Let noble thoughts come to us from every side*

## Science-Spirituality Dialogue 'Reality Beyond Rationality'



A Discussion between  
**Dr. Robert Mah** (lef), NASA  
and  
**Dr. T. D. Singh** (right),  
Physical Organic Chemist,  
Founding-Director of  
Bhaktivedanta Institute

**T. D. Singh (Henceforth TDS):** Modern science has developed mostly to research physical knowledge. That is not the only aspect of reality.

**Dr. Robert Mah (henceforth RM):** Is observation always physical?

**TDS:** Yes, experimentations, etc., these are sense perceptions, the perceptions by our five gross senses, something that you can feel, can touch and can see. These are all rational. It is easy to comprehend that the table is here when you can touch and feel that it is there. We call this 'scientific knowledge'. But science has its own limits. For example, the inner feelings, inner aspects of our life, I think science is not able to fully understand that.

**RM:** Yes, I agree.

**TDS:** Spirituality in the Vedic tradition deals with the value, the meaning, the purpose, the inner dimensions of life. I think religion is a poor translation of the word Sanātana or principle of spirituality. In other words, science and spirituality are complementary in this Vedic tradition. Therefore, we don't argue between science and religion or science and spirituality; there is harmony about that within most of the Indian scholarly community. But in the West, there have been differences between scientific knowledge and religious traditions, especially for the last centuries. How can we analyze this limitation?

**RM:** Let's draw an analogy. We are trying to understand the human brain, and we can only measure the global acts of attention, the brain waves. From there, we make rough inference as to what we think the brain is doing, how it functions. Is there a spirit? At this time, we cannot go much further with the tools we have.

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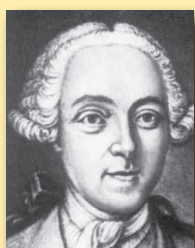
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**Report on**  
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*"To attain happiness ... one must use all one's efforts  
to expand more and more one's knowledge of  
God and His works.*

— Leonhard Euler  
Mathematician

**To Know about Life, Matter, and their Interactions is called Knowledge**

But maybe in the future, we may be able to explore the brain in deeper ways and understand about its various parts, how it works. We might get a better idea because now we don't know. It is just a lot of electrical activity. That is what I think.

**TDS:** This conception of 'meaning and purpose' is also a part of scientific research. In order to do that, I think scientists should freely accept the spiritual aspects of reality; that part should not be isolated. What do you think?

**RM:** I think the scientists right now are the pure scientists. They are working towards a different goal. The spirituality aspect is not really addressed. It's just left unspoken I guess.

**TDS:** Therefore the idea of a 'new science' should be brought in. The spiritual aspects should be included as a part of our scientific quest.

**RM:** I think we can open the door. Like you said, we have to look for where is the answer to things that are observed, with a different perspective. Because I think that the perception really changes over time, over space. I mean you are affected by certain situations in life that decide how you perceive things. So which one is the truth, mine or yours or his? It becomes difficult.

**TDS:** Yes, there is a need for a new science. A lot of people are talking about it today, like the physicists and even the biologists. For things that we are not able to handle with the current scientific knowledge and skill, my conception is that the spiritual aspects of reality should partner with science.

**RM:** Oh yes, we have to be open-minded. When you are a scientist, you need to look at all evidences.

[Excerpt from the book, *Tattvajiñāsā* Vol-2 — Magazine of the Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata]

### On the Shoulder of Giants

## Sri Madhavendra Puri

(The Grand Preceptor of Raganuga-Bhakti)

Sri Madhavendra Puri was the great Vaishnava acharya who initiated the *raga-marga bhakti* (path of loving devotional service) during the 14th century. He serves as the connecting link between the *Madhva* and *Gaudiya sampradayas*. Sri Madhavendra Puri was the disciple of Sri Lakshmiapati Tirtha in the lineage of *Brahma* or *Madhva sampradaya*. Until the advent of Sri Lakshmiapati Tirtha, the disciplic succession of Madhvacharya followed ritualistic worship of Lord Krishna alone in the mood of awe and reverence. It was only after Sri Madhavendra Puri, the worship of Sri Krishna along with his consort Srimati Radharani in the conjugal mood (*Madurya bhava*) was established. Thus, he is revered throughout the world as the sprout of divine love (*Krishna-premankur*), that later grew to become the great tree of divine love in the form of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sri Vrindavana Dasa Thakura, the celebrated author of *Chaitanya Bhagavat*, describes him as the embodiment of ecstatic loving devotion who displayed uncommon love of Godhead. His mind, body, and soul had embraced the divine so much that mere looking at dark blue rain cloud that resembled Lord Krishna's complexion would make him fall unconscious in an ecstatic trance.



Sri Madhavendra Puri

As a renunciant monk, Sri Madhavendra Puri lived a very austere life. Absorbed in chanting the holy names of the lord, he would never go out for alms and accepted whatever came on its own accord by the mercy of Lord. Therefore he would fast for several days without food.

Concerned for the well being of others, Sri Madhavendra Puri was keen to distribute the eternal wealth of love of Godhead to help people relive from the material miseries. He traveled to various holy places of India and later made his residence at Vrindavan. He founded the Vaishnava Matha at Mathura and began the restoration of Vrindavana. Some of his prominent disciples included Ishvara Puri, Advaita Acharya, Paramananda Puri (a Brahmin from the Tirhu area), Brahmananda Puri, Shri Ranga Puri, Pundarika Vidyandhi, and Raghupati Upadhyaya.

During his stay at Govinda Kunda in Vrindavan, he recovered the Gopala deity buried in the nearby forest. As desired by the Lord, the Deity was installed on top of Govardhana Hill, and the 'annakuta festival' (grand festival offering a mountain of varieties of delicious preparations) was observed.

Sri Madhavendra Puri is well known in connection with the temple of Kshira Chora Gopinatha, of Remuna (near Balasore) in Orissa. One night in a dream Lord (the Gopala Deity) asked Madhavendra Puri to collect some sandalwood pulp from Jagannath Puri and smear it on the body of the Deity. Having received this order, he immediately started for Orissa. Traveling through Bengal, he reached Remuna village and there received a pot of condensed milk (*kheer*) offered to the Deity of Gopinatha. This pot of condensed milk was stolen by Gopinatha and delivered to Madhavendra Puri. Since then, the Gopinatha Deity has been known as 'Kshira Chora Gopinatha'— the Deity who stole the pot of condensed milk.

Sri Madhavendra Puri spent his last days at Gopinatha temple at Remuna along with his disciple Sri Ishvara Puri. He departed from this mortal world in the humblest state, crying out for Krishna in separation. Thus, he practically demonstrated that the pinnacle of *bhakti yoga* was to develop ecstatic love of separation, (*Vipralamba Seva*) and taught the world about the science of the loving relationship between the soul and the Supreme Lord in its highest form.

## Vedanta & Science

### Ways to Build Peace — A Vedantic Perspective

We are entering a new era with newer hope and expectation for a most meaningful world in which all of humanity can live peacefully. The potential for achieving this desire is in the mind of every sincere person. What seems to be required is learning genuinely how to respect each other in spite of differences in culture, traditions, languages, colors and so on, realizing that we are all children of God.

Religion has been an inherent part of human life since the dawn of civilization. In fact, it is religion and culture which make human beings different from other forms of life. At different times in the history of human civilization, serious

Bible. Bhagavad Gita means the 'Divine Song of God'. It teaches that all living beings such as human beings, animals, birds, insects, and all forms of life are His dear children.

All religions say that the best way to build peace is to respect each other knowing that we are all children of God, our common father and so we are all brothers and sisters. The Bhagavad Gita, our Bible teaches that we human beings have to develop some essential divine qualities. These qualities are described in sanskrit language as — *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *satyam* (truthfulness), *daya* (mercifulness), etc.

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of India used these principles of *ahimsa* and *satyam* to achieve India's freedom from the British rule, without violence. Thus everything can be achieved by peaceful and nonviolent means.

Our scripture gives us a 'peace formula' (Bhagavad Gita Chapter 5 verse 29).



misunderstanding among various religious groups, inter as well as intra, arises causing war and division, resulting in tremendous degradation and loss of religious meaning and purpose. We can only suggest that the primary cause is the lack of spiritual and cultural education as well as ignorance of the principles, knowledge and application of true religion.

We are all pilgrims here and we have come to learn from each other or to gather wisdom and knowledge from various traditions for a fulfilling experience.

God has different names in different religious traditions. In Islam He is called Allah. In Christianity, you call Jesus, son of God, etc. Our scripture is Bhagavad Gita as you have your

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram  
suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānāṁ jñātva māṁ śāntim ṛcchati*

We have to learn that God is the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities. He is also the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities. All our activities should be dedicated for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord in every word, in every action, and in every deed.

We have to apply this in our day to day practical life and this will bring us lasting peace and happiness.

[Excerpt from the book, *A Glimpse of 25 Years of IKSCON Manipur*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata

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