



SCIENCE & SPIRITUAL QUEST

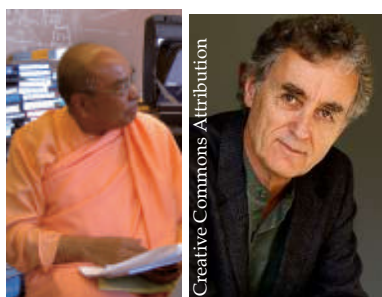
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आ नौ भद्राः कर्तवो यन्तु विश्वतोऽर्दब्धासो अर्परीतास उद्भिर्दः । (RgVeda) *Let noble thoughts come to us from every side*

Science-Spirituality Dialogue Synthesis of Science and Religion



A Discussion between
Fritjof Capra (right),
Author, *The Tao of Physics*
The Elmwood Institute, California
and
Dr. T. D. Singh (left),
Physical Organic Chemist,
Founding-Director of
Bhaktivedanta Institute

Dr. T. D. Singh: How do you think a synthesis between science and religion can be achieved?

Fritjof Capra: The essential nature of reality is seen in a very similar way in modern science and in religious experience, but the way it is described depends very much on the language we use. As I said, ... I realized that not only modern physics but modern science in general leads us to a world view which is very much in agreement with the ancient Eastern traditions. Many sciences lead in that same direction. That's the good news. The bad news is that, for a synthesis to happen, there's something which is essential to a world view in modern science and which has not happened to a large extent, and that is that the entire outlook of science and the motivation of the scientist must change from a position of control and domination of Nature. I think that is very essential.

In the seventeenth century the position of controlling Nature was personified by Sir Francis Bacon. He introduced the inductive method of making experiments, and he promoted the controlled experiment. This methodology, which is a way of domination, was transferred to all Western sciences, and it is still very much with us. For example, in biology, the way to study an animal was to bind it down and dissect it or to stick electrodes in it. But that's not the way to understand an animal.

In trying to dominate Nature we are killing ourselves. We have to realize that we cannot control Nature. Nature, the living cosmos, is too large for us to control.

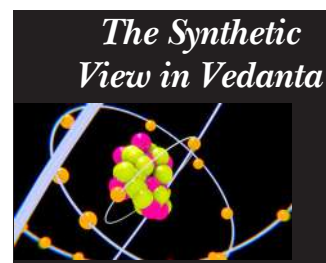
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► *On the*
SHOULDERS of
GIANTS



Sri Jayadeva Goswami

► **VEDANTA and**
SCIENCE



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REPORT

Prahlād

e - Pāthashala

15th - 30th May 2020



"The real world of metaphysics is not the starting point, but the goal of all scientific endeavor, a beacon winking and showing the way from an inaccessibly remote distance."

— Max Planck
Nobel Laureate in Physics

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

We have to go back to science before the seventeenth century, to cooperate with Nature and try to understand it, not in order to dominate but to be inspired. During the Middle Ages, scientists used to pursue their fields for the glory of God. Their purpose was not to dominate but to be enlightened, to achieve enlightenment. That kind of attitude has to return, or science will not survive. And it is precisely this attitude that the mystical tradition already has. In mysticism you study reality by using your own body and mind as an instrument. You don't try to dominate and control. That is the profound change of heart that I think needs to happen.

Dr. T. D. Singh: Your feelings are very close to the process of *bhakti*.

Fritjof Capra: Yes, that's right. We have to cultivate humility, and I hope that the new world view which is emerging will help us to achieve that state.

[Excerpt from the book, *Synthesis of Science and Religion — Critical Essays and Dialogues*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata]

On the Shoulder of Giants

Sri Jayadeva Goswami

(The Saint-Poet of Odisha)

Sri Jayadeva Goswami is the 12th-century saint-poet best known for his literary work '*Gita Govinda*'. He is one of the foremost acharya, who uncovered the highest transcendental mellow of devotion "*madhurya-bhakti*." Sri Jayadeva Goswami introduced a simple style of singing the Supreme Lord's prayers known as the *Padavali kirtan* in Odisha. Several composers across India were inspired by Jayadeva Goswami and adopted this unique style of *kirtan*, that can be sung with ease by all.

The sacred poem of *Gita Govinda* has become an integral part of the worship and rituals of Lord Jagannath. During the *Bada Sringar Vesha* of the deities done every evening, the Lord is adorned with clothes called '*Gitagovinda Khandua*' -- silken cloth inscribed with Jayadeva's composition and these songs are sung every night just before the deities go for sleep. Also during *Navakalevara* (preparing new deities of Lord Jagannath), logs of the special Neem tree are brought to the temple by covering them with the *Gitagovinda khandua*. Centuries rolled away, and the fame of Sri Jayadeva Goswami remains undiminished.

Jayadeva was born to a Brahmin couple Bhojadeva and Bamadevi in a village called Kenubilva Gram, Birbhum district of West Bengal. From very early childhood, Jayadeva mystically displayed knowledge of Sanskrit poetry and devotion to Lord Krishna. Jayadeva's parents passed away when he was seven. After this, Jayadeva moved to live on the bank of Ajaya river, building a small hut and led a very simple life. One day Jayadeva found the Radha Madhava deities in this river's water. He was overjoyed by receiving this blessing of Lord and, from then on engaged in worshipping these deities as his life and soul. He used his poetic skill to compose hymns in praise of the Supreme Lord in a simple and colloquial style. People from the neighborhood relished these poems and sang them while performing the daily chores. Soon his fame reached the King of Bengal, Lakshman Sen, who wanted to adorn him as the royal poet. But Jayadeva Goswami declined this offer and prepared to leave Bengal to reside in Jagannath Puri. Desirous of association with

Jayadeva, the King had a cottage built in the Champa Hati village at Nabadwip for Jayadeva to facilitate his stay in a peaceful atmosphere.

One day Jayadeva had a vision of Radha Madhava deities, combined and assumed the form of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The Supreme Lord revealed to Jayadeva that He would appear in this form

in Nawadwipa shortly with the mission to distribute love of Godhead to all, by chanting of holy names. Mahaprabhu instructed Jayadeva to go to Jagannath Puri saying that this place would be His residence during the last days of Gauranga Lila. Following these instructions, Jayadeva moved to Jagannath Puri and spent the rest of his life in this holy place of Orissa.

By the divine arrangement of Lord Jagannath, Jayadeva was married to Padmavati, who was not only a devoted and pious woman but also well-versed in the art of dance and music. Both Jayadeva and Padmavathi, engaged their artistic skills in the service of Lord Jagannath. While Jayadeva composed and sang the devotional hymns, Padmavathi enacted these compositions, through dance and gave pleasure to Lord Jagannath. After a brief visit to the holy land of Vrindavan -- Lord Krishna's birth place, Jayadeva was inspired to compose the exquisite poetry -- *Gita Govinda*, describing the pastimes of Lord Krishna and His Divine Consort, Srimati Radhika. The masterpiece of Sanskrit poetry-- *Gita Govinda* is revered and admired, not only as a poetic composition of great beauty but also as a religious doctrine that explains the *bhakti-rasa-Sastra*. Indeed the Supreme Lord himself had come in disguise to help Jayadeva complete a verse of the 10th canto of this poetry.

Right at the beginning of the composition, Jayadeva clearly states that *Gita Govinda* is an aid to the remembrance of Krishna—for *Hari-smarana*. Jayadeva first presents two songs of invocation in praise of Supreme -- *Dasavataara* and *Sritha Kamala Stotram*. These two songs are often sung and relished by all class of men.

Sri Jayadeva Goswami forbade ordinary people to dwell into further contents of the book that describes the transcendental devotional mellows of Vraja, which is meant only for spiritually advanced souls of *bhakti marg*.

Through his works Sri Jayadeva Goswami sowed the seeds of *Madhurya bhakti*, that grew into a massive tree with the advent of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Thus, Sri Jayadeva Goswami is revered throughout the world as the Jagat Guru by the Vaishnavas and other bhakti schools. Sri Jayadeva Goswami passed away on the auspicious day of *Pausha Sankranti*. Every year on this day, thousands of people gather at his birthplace and a celebration known as 'Jayadeva Mela' is held with the singing of *Gita Govinda*.



Sri Jayadeva Goswami

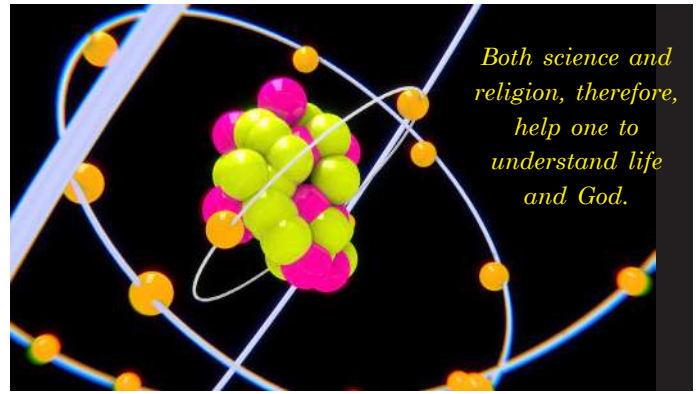
Vedanta & Science

The Synthetic View in Vedanta

In Vedanta there has always been harmony between science and religion because their domains are clearly defined and understood. Science deals with *aparā-vidyā*, or material knowledge; true religion deals with *parā-vidyā*, spiritual knowledge. Knowledge of one's body and its components, atoms, and molecules is *aparā-vidyā*; knowledge of the conscious living being (the *ātma*), transcendent life, and God is *parā-vidyā*. *aparā-vidyā* can be experienced through sensory perceptions, but *parā-vidyā* is experienced through the discipline of yoga and the science of meditation. *Aparā-vidyā* indicates the existence of *parā-vidyā*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that *parasya dṛśyate dharmo hy aparasmīn samanvayāt* (3.26.49) : "Since the cause exists certainly in its effect as well, the characteristics of the former are observed in the latter." This is a synthetic principle in Vedanta.

The cosmos is the arrangement of God, the Supreme Being, and from the imprint of each of the created things in the universe we can see His fundamental alphabet or symptom. Thus, in Vedanta, knowledge of the atom or of the DNA molecule enhances further understanding of the knowledge of God. Both science and religion, therefore, help one to understand life and God. It is in this spirit that we have used the word synthesis, not in a dialectic sense but in the sense of assimilation, incorporation, and knowing the function and relationship of the part to the whole, as, for example, the function of a flower to a garland. This logic is explained elaborately in the *Sāṅkhya* system of knowledge given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The scientific knowledge of matter helps analytically-minded people to comprehend the knowledge of God. Thus we see that some of the most brilliant physicists of the twentieth century, scientists like Einstein, Planck, Schrödinger, and others, appreciated the existence of God through the study of the atom. Of course, there are also great souls, sages, and saintly persons who can perceive God through prayer and total surrender.

The spirit of Vedanta encourages free and honest enquiry in the search for the ultimate truth, the standard of knowledge. Vedanta is not dogmatic; it is open for verification and critical examination. Acceptance and rejection of certain principles must be based on sound human reasoning. Many twentieth-century scientists are hesitant to discuss God. Nonetheless, the knowledge of quantum chemistry and quantum physics is likely to encourage enquiry into the nature of consciousness and thereby into transcendent life and God.



Knowledge is neither Western nor Eastern. It is universal. The thirst for knowledge, whether scientific or religious, is part of man's culture. Scientifically or religiously, has Darwinian evolution contributed significantly to our understanding of the universe, of life and the cosmos? Darwin claimed there was no God, but that is merely one man's opinion. It is up to each individual, scientist or layman, to accept or reject this opinion, to decide whether Darwin's ideas are rational or not. If they are irrational, Darwin never forced anyone to accept them, so there is no need to blame him. Vedanta encourages one to question, and hence its spirit is healthy. If the Big Bang theory results in a "chaotic dance of molecules" giving rise to life, what is the idea of God in this model? Is the Big Bang caused by God?

Because of the Darwinian theory's sole emphasis on material, or geologic, life, modern man's activities have been directed towards machines and automation. The end result is that in the attempt for scientific and technological excellence, fundamental issues of morality the rightness and wrongness of living seem to have been neglected. This has resulted in an almost total devaluation of ethics which destroys the dignity of man and is the prime cause of conflict between science and religion.

In the modern age the problems of drug addiction, the tensions of nuclear war, and the ecological crippling of the earth are pathological symptoms of a Darwinian, material paradigm.

It is worthwhile to note that theistic and atheistic people are everywhere, all over the world. The human race is one, not Eastern or Western. The dawning of a new age will begin when both the theists and atheists can sit together, exchange dialogues on matters of common concern, and make sensible decisions for the global well-being of the earth's inhabitants. It is not that theists must fight against atheists. There is much common ground.

[Excerpt from the book, *Synthesis of Science and Religion — Critical Essays and Dialogues*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata]

BOOK

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Science and religion are the two most dominant forces of humanity in the search for the ultimate meaning of life and the universe. Are these two forces reconcilable? If yes, what are the possible grounds for their synthesis? Could the recent developments in science and technology about human nature and the cosmos enable us to explore religious wisdom in new ways? In the pivotal times like ours, what role could science and religion dialogue play in restoring world peace? Moreover, what implications would this dialogue have on our future scientific researches? Reflecting on some of these profound issues, Dr. T. D. Singh (His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami) presents in this volume four ground-breaking essays on science and religion.

Prahlad e-pathashala

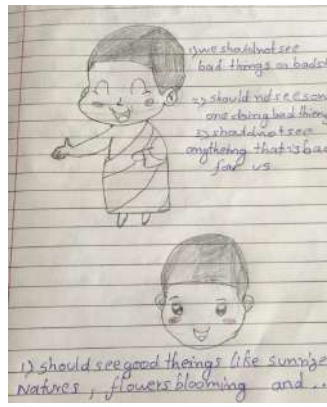
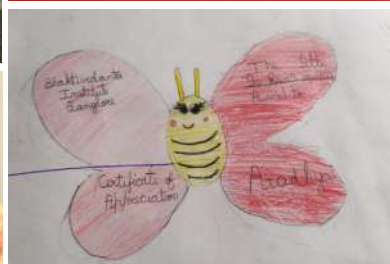
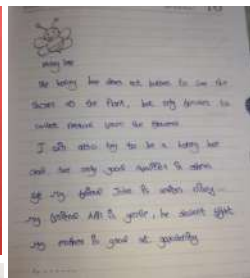
Visiary: Dr. T. D. Singh (His Holiness Srila Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami)

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