



# SCIENCE & SPIRITUAL QUEST

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

## Science-Spirituality Dialogue Scientific and Spiritual Endeavours



**A Discussion with**  
**Prof. Charles H. Townes** (right),  
*Nobel Laureate in Physics* and  
**Dr. T. D. Singh** (left);  
*Physical Organic Chemist,*  
*Founding-Director of Bhaktivedanta Institute*

**Dr. T. D. Singh:** It is true that science and scientists have contributed generously towards the welfare of humanity. However ...the one sided reductionist approach to understanding life, excludes any spiritual principle. Is science limiting itself to a completely material paradigm?

**Prof. Charles H. Townes:** Science is the search for truth. It is meant to understand nature. It is not necessarily materialistic. Understanding of the universe, I think, is somewhat parallel to our understanding of our relation with the Creator. In this search for truth, it will be certainly beneficial if scientists can incorporate spiritual principles in their scientific works. We have to realize that our present scientific knowledge is quite limited. ...

**Professor Jagdish N. Srivastava:** Do you think that science at the most fundamental level is more or less a spiritual endeavor?

**Prof. Charles H. Townes:** Well, I think they are closely related. The well-known scientist and philosopher, Percy Bridgeman of Harvard, was once asked, "What is your definition of scientific method?" Bridgeman answered that "the scientific method is to find the answer." That's also true with religion and spirituality. Religion and spirituality are attempts to understand the meaning and purpose of life and the universe, and science is an attempt to understand how the universe works and discover its structure. 'How it works' and 'structure' are related. Similarly, if there is a meaning, it certainly affects structure. I think it is becoming essential to consider these things. There are also interesting similarities between scientific and spiritual endeavors: (1) There is faith in both scientific and spiritual endeavors (2) There are revelations in scientific discoveries similar to revelations

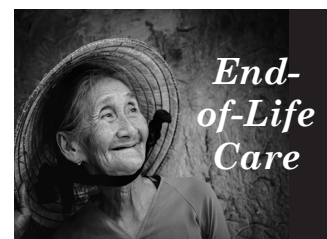
## INSIDE

► *On the*  
**SHOULDERS of**  
**GIANTS**



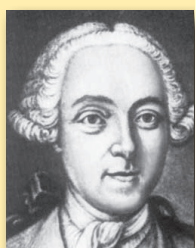
Sri Vyāsātīrtha

► **VEDANTA and**  
**SCIENCE**



► **NEWS BIRDS**

**Announcement**  
12<sup>th</sup> AISSQ Conference  
(ONLINE)  
10-12 December 2021



*"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

in spiritual traditions (3) There is use of logic but there is no absolute proof in both scientific and spiritual disciplines (4) Science as well as spirituality value pursuit of truth (5) Just like there are differences of opinions in spiritual traditions, there are differences of opinions among scientists. In India, there is much more union between the two (science and spirituality) than in the West. I think that Western scientists are coming back to that point of view - what the universe is all about. Although presently there are very few scientists interested in the search for the meaning and purpose behind the universe, their number is increasing. ...

I think the Indian point of view is very useful. As Professor Raman says, "... the Vedas are among the first articulations in human culture of a synthesis of science and spirituality." We need to explore different viewpoints, different instincts about the problem. Otherwise, everyone going in the same way may not find the better way.

[Excerpt from the book, *Savijnanam* vol-2— *Scientific Exploration for a Spiritual Paradigm*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata]

### On the Shoulder of Giants

## Sri Vyāsātīrtha

### The Prince of Dialecticians of the Dvaita Vedānta

Śrī Vyāsātīrtha (also called Vyasaraja or Vyasarāya) is one of the prominent saint-poet of the *Dvaita* school of Vedānta. He is honored as the patron saint of the Vijayanagar Empire during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Śrī Vyāsātīrtha contributed immensely in systematizing the *Dvaita* philosophy by bringing together the dispersed threads of doctrines of *Madhva Siddhānta*. Thus, Śrī Vyāsātīrtha is highly esteemed in *Madhva Sampradāya*, and revered as one of the three spiritual preceptors of Dvaita Vedānta (*munitrayam*) along with Sri Jayatīrtha and Sri Madhvacharya.

Śrī Vyāsātīrtha was born as Yatiraja in 1460, at Bannur, (a village in the Mysore, Karnataka) to Sri Rallanna Sumati and Akkamma. At the age of five, Yatiraja began his formal education and soon acquired proficiency in the subjects *Kavya* (poetry), *Nataka* (drama), *Alamkara* (rhetoric), and *Vyakarana* (grammar). At the age of eight, Yatiraja was left under the care of Sri Brahmanya Tīrtha (the pontiff of Sri Purvadi mutt). The saint foresaw the greater purpose of the divine appearance of the child who was none other than the incarnation of Prahlada, the great devotee of Lord Narasimha. So, he wished that Yatiraja should take to *sannyāsa* (renounce order of life) without any delay. But the little boy was hesitant and escaped into the forest, intending to return to his parents. On his way, while he was resting under a tree, Yatiraja had a beatific vision in his dream. Lord Viṣṇu appeared and instructed him to dedicate his life to the divine service for the upliftment of humankind. Yatiraja instantly returned to the hermitage and accepted *sannyāsa* order. Thus he became known as Vyāsātīrtha.

In 1478 Śrī Vyāsātīrtha became the successor to the Vedānta Pītha after the demise of Sri Brahmanya Tīrtha. He excelled in the philosophy and practice of Dvaita Vedānta, under the tutelage of the renowned Ācārya, Sri padaraja Tīrtha (also known as Lakshminaryana Tīrtha) at Mulabagal (Kolar district, Karnataka). Śrī Vyāsātīrtha soon became famous as a master at debate and dialogue in logic and philosophy. He emerged triumphant



Sri Vyāsātīrtha (1460 – 1539)

over the leading scholars of the day and went on to become the spiritual advisor of King Saluva Narasimha at Chandragiri.

In 1486, Śrī Vyāsātīrtha was entrusted with the worship of Lord Balaji at Tirupati. Here, he tirelessly served as a priest, administrator, and teacher for twelve long years. He arranged for special festivities for the Lord throughout the year. Furthermore, he installed "Vimana Venkatesha", the silver frame accentuated Venkatesha on the golden dome. (The *darśana* of Vimana Venkatesha is said to be equivalent to the *darśana* of the deity inside the temple.) Touring around in southern India, he imparted teachings of *Dvaita* philosophy to people leading them on the path of *bhakti-yoga*. Indeed, Lord Balaji was very pleased with the loving services of Śrī Vyāsātīrtha and thus cast His upper cloth on the saint when he was just about to leave the Tirumala hills for other duties at Vijayanagara kingdom.

Under the tutelage of Śrī Vyāsātīrtha, the Vijayanagar Empire had its zenith and produced its greatest ruler. On one occasion, Śrī Vyāsātīrtha ascended the throne to save King Krishnadevaraya from *Kuhu Dosha* (an unfavorable combination of planets as per the astrology that leads to death by an attack of a poisonous snake.) Soon after warding off the impending danger, Śrī Vyāsātīrtha offered everything back to the king to resume his royal duties. From then onwards, the saint became known as "Sri Vyāsa-Raja Tīrtha".

Śrī Vyāsātīrtha was instrumental in revolutionizing Carnatic music in southern India. Although he was an eminent Sanskrit scholar, Śrī Vyāsātīrtha wrote several poems and songs in Kannada. His compositions served as both a means of expressing devotion and presenting the philosophical teachings in simple language within reach of the common person. He started a new school of *bhakti* called '*Dasakuta*' (the singing mendicants). He demonstrated that the devotional path to supreme is attainable by all beings beyond the prejudices of caste and creed. His prominent disciples include Sri Purandaradasa, Sri Vadiraja, Sri Kanakadasa, and Sri Vaikunthadasa, hailing from *non-brahminical* castes.

On the 8th of March, 1539, Śrī Vyāsātīrtha departed from this world, and his mortal remains are enshrined in Nava Brindavana, near Hampi on the banks of Tungabhadra river. Śrī Vyāsātīrtha's phenomenal works include -- *Nyāyainīṭa*, *Tarkatāṇḍava*, and *Chandrika*, collectively known as *Vyasa-Traya*. The great saint, by his teachings, writings and practice laid an irrefutable foundation, to establish that the Almighty Supreme Lord is a Person (beyond the concept of *Brahma jyothi*) and the living entities as part and parcel of the Supreme.



## Vedanta & Science

### End-of-Life Care – A Vedantic Perspective

According to the Vedantic literature, life is sacred and eternal (Bhagavad-gita 2.14). When the life particle interacts with the material elements, the different symptoms of material life – birth, disease, old age and death – manifest. Thus, aging and dying are symptoms of the various stages of material existence.. Everybody needs care and attention at various stages of life, especially in the stages of aging and dying.

Vedanta stresses the importance of human life in the cosmic creation. Human life is meant to inquire into the nature of ultimate truth (*brahma-jijnāsa*) and to transcend immediate biological needs. Only in human birth can one have the opportunity to get the perfection of life.

The optimal strategy by which to tackle the problem of aging and dying is scientifically presented in the *Varṇāśrama* system, a significantly advocated concept in the Vedantic paradigm. *Varṇāśrama* system refers to the religio-social system of living, indicating the procedures that need to be followed to prepare for the last stage of life.

The *Varṇāśrama* system can also be observed to provide a stable caring environment for the elderly that involves components of both individual and collective caring. Individual caring is through prayer and meditation. Vedanta rightly identifies control of the mind as the most important and sublime truth of end-of-life care, and conveys that praying is the means to achieve control over one's thoughts and for realizing ultimate happiness. With respect to social caring, the *Varṇāśrama* system presents the principle that women, whether young or old need to be protected by their fathers, husbands or grown up sons under all circumstances. Regarding the care of elderly men, in both the stages of *Vānaprastha* (the retired stage of life) and *sannyāsa* (the renounced stage of life), Vedanta recommends intensification of prayer and meditational processes. Austerities for the elderly are based on time, place and circumstances. For example, a famous devotee named Sravanakumar, described in the Vedantic scriptures, carried his parents in a wooden balance consisting of two baskets hanging over a wooden stick to different places of pilgrimage, as both of them were blind. He can be seen as a perfect example of end-of-life care



provided by children to their parents. Therefore, caring of the elderly can be observed to be properly formulated in Vedanta. The individual caring of the person is recommended by controlling the mind, and when a person achieves full control over his mental activities in old age, by intense prayer and devotion, renunciation of the physical world is recommended through *sannyāsa*. In summary, both individual caring (prayer and meditation) and collective caring (caring by competent authorities) can be seen as a cost effective remedy for the problems of aging and dying as indicated by Vedanta.

Three types of approaches to effectively tackle the problem of aging and dying: 1) The first step is to urge for the prevention, healthy living and wellness of aging people ... applying the principles of Ayurveda and vegetarianism, dependence on the Supreme Lord ... 2) The second approach constitutes religious belief in the form of practicing humility, patience, tolerance and kindness in both the elderly and the young ... 3) The third approach is caring for the sick as the psychological impact of care, love and affection have been proven to have a principal affect in healing of the elderly.

With a spiritually integrated approach, successful aging and caring for the elderly can be established even before one retires from professional activities. Therefore, the end-of-life care should be goal-oriented for the spiritual upliftment of both individuals and the society. The Vedantic approach recommends a purpose-filled retirement and preparation for death.

[Excerpt from the book, *Vedanta and Science of Aging: Scientific and Spiritual Perspective*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata, 2005.]

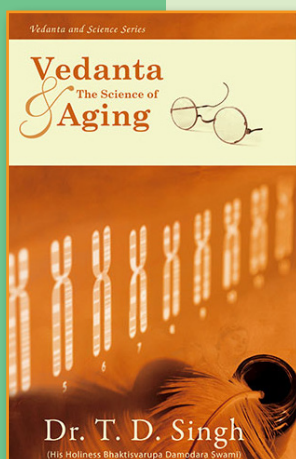
## BOOK

Online Store:

<https://store.binstitute.org/product/vedanta-and-the-science-of-aging/>

### VEDANTA AND THE SCIENCE OF AGING

Softbound; Rs. 200;  
Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata



Bounded by birth at one end and terminated by death at the other, aging is an integral part of our life. Today, there is tremendous research trying to understand the mechanisms of aging. From exploring the use of hormone therapy and antioxidants to extending the human life span, aging, however, still remains far from our comprehension. Vedanta, the topmost scientific and philosophical treatise of ancient Indian spiritual and cultural heritage, has immense insights to provide towards aging, dying and end-of-life care for humanity throughout the world. In this volume, the author, Dr. T. D. Singh, a visionary who himself witnessed a wide spectrum of life, from his serious Ph.D. research days to deep Vedantic engagements, presents these invaluable insights in the light of modern developments.



### Inspiration

Dr. T. D. Singh

(His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami)

Founder Chairman, AISSQ Series



$$H(X) = -\sum_{i=1}^n P(x_i) \log_b P(x_i)$$

$$\Delta x \cdot \Delta p \sim \hbar$$
$$\Delta E \cdot \Delta t \sim \hbar$$

### SOME INVITED SPEAKERS

Martin Nowak, *Harvard University, USA*

Hector Rosario, *University of Florida*

Prof. Ramgopal Uppaluri, *IIT Guwahati*

Prof. P. K. Singh, *IIT-BHU Varanasi*

Dr. H. K. Mohanta, *BITS-Pilani*

### TOPICS

- ▶ Mathematics and Spirituality
- ▶ Evolution and God
- ▶ Physics and Beyond
- ▶ Environment and Spirituality
- ▶ Holistic Education and Development
- ▶ Vedanta and Science
- ▶ Biotechnology and Spirituality
- ▶ Quantum mechanics and Consciousness

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