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

Science-Spirituality Dialogue Religion Is A Natural Part of Life



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

Dr. T. D. Singh (TDS): Well, on reading your biography, it is very inspiring to note that you are not only a pioneering scientist but also a highly religious person. There are not too many scientists in the world like you. I was very impressed with your background, especially your growing up – the human side of you – and the tremendous amount of respect you have for your parents, your deep commitment to religious values, and your duties in the church. It is something very exemplary. What do you think are some of the important factors that have contributed to your fascinating life?

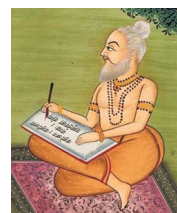
Prof. William D. Phillips (WDP): Certainly the way I was brought up by my parents contributed a great deal to my religious thought because religion was always a part of our lives. We always gave thanks before meals and my parents taught me to pray every day. We always went to church, and we were very much involved in the life of the church – not just going to church on Sundays, but also being involved in other activities of the church. Many aspects of faith and church were just a part of life for me. It was something that was as much a part of life as other things were. Growing up in that kind of environment obviously had a big effect on me. I always thought of religion as being a natural part of life.

TDS: You also said that you learned from childhood to respect other people, cultures and faiths from your parents. I think that is a wonderful quality that can ultimately foster humility and open-mindedness.

WDP: Yes, I think it's something that children ought to be taught. It's something that children have to learn, and it's very important for us to teach our children in this way. Just as we can teach our children to be very accepting and respectful of

INSIDE

► *On the*
SHOULDERS of
GIANTS



Mahārṣi Vālmiki

► **VEDANTA and**
SCIENCE

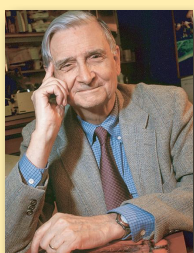
*Different
States of
Realization of
God*



► **NEWS BIRDS**



Announcement:
Symposium
(Online)
December 9th, 2021



"The predisposition to religious belief is the most complex and powerful force in the human mind and in all probability an ineradicable part of human nature."

— Edward Osborne Wilson
Biologist and Naturalist

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

other people, it is of course possible to teach them the opposite. I think a great deal of difficulty that we have in the world is from people who have been taught from an early age not to respect people of all faiths and backgrounds. But I was taught by my parents that that is the right way — to respect everyone.

TDS: A good family environment plays a very important role in human culture. It is important for the parents to teach their children to respect people of other cultures and communities, to cultivate a culture of unity in diversity. I think if we all act like that then it will be a lot easier to have world peace.

[Excerpt from the book, *Savajinānam* Vol-5-6 — *Scientific Exploration for a Spiritual Paradigm*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata]

On the Shoulder of Giants

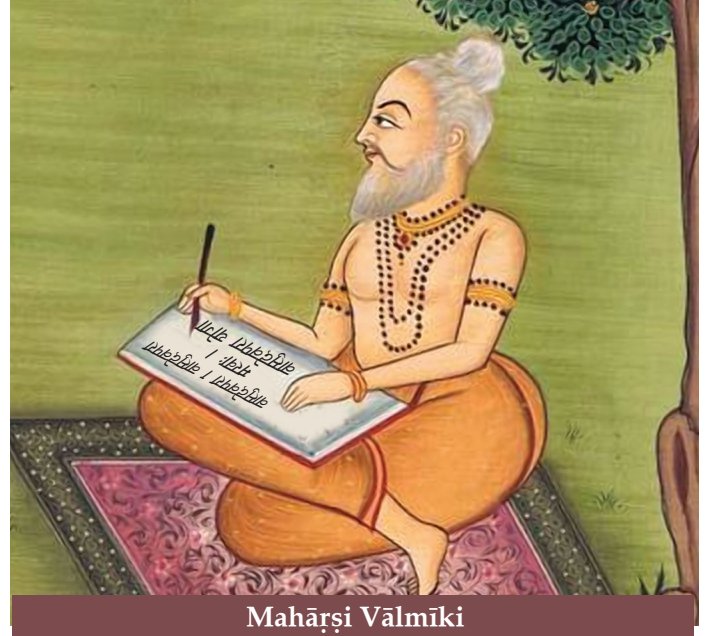
Mahārṣi Vālmīki

(The Cuckoo of Poetic Brilliance)

Mahārṣi Vālmīki is the poet-saint, well known for his Sanskrit epic poetry -- *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa* and is revered as *Ādikavi* -- foremost among the poets. Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* is the largest ancient epics in world literature, consisting of nearly 24,000 verses, divided into seven *Kandas* (books) and about 500 *sargas* (chapters). Sage Budha Kaushika, the author of *Rāma Raksha Stotra*, praised Mahārṣi Vālmīki as the cuckoo bird sitting atop the branch of poetic brilliance and singing sweetly the glories of Lord Rāma.

Maharishi Vālmīki was born as Ratnakara to a brahmin named Pracheta (also known as Sumali). As a child, Ratnakara got lost in the forest and was found by a hunter who raised him as his son. Under his foster father's guidance, Ratnakara grew up to become a hunter and highway robber to sustain his family. One day, while passing through the jungle, the divine sage Narada was attacked by Ratnakara. But then, out of great compassion to the pitiful state of Rathnakar, the noble sage enlightened him about the highest purpose and meaning of life. Repenting for his impious deeds, Rathnakar inquired if there is any possibility of deliverance for such a wicked person as himself. The sage advised Rathnakar to chant the holy name 'Rāma' unceasingly. But then, Rathnakar could not say 'Rāma'. He replied, 'My mouth will not form that word' and began weeping helplessly. The sage then gave him the reverse syllables of Rāma: 'Marā— Marā' to repeat endlessly. ("Marā" means dead.) Following these instructions, Ratnakara sat meditatively and got engrossed in reciting the syllables 'marā'. As years passed, ant-hills came up around his body. When Sage Narada returned, he heard the sound of the *mantra* coming from the ant-hill. He was very pleased with Ratnakara's sincere devotion and bestowed upon him the honor of a Brahmarshi. Then onward, Ratnakara was known as Sage Vālmīki -- reborn from the ant-hill (*Valmika*). The brief association of the great sage Narada had transformed the cruel hunter into a God-realized soul. As extolled in all scriptures, this is the power of saintly association.

Sage Vālmīki founded his ashram at the bank of River Ganga. By the will of providence, the sage desired to know if there was anyone around endowed with virtuous qualities (*guṇavān*) like modesty, excellence, an embodiment of eternal truth (*satya*),



Mahārṣi Vālmīki

and righteous conduct (*dharma*). Soon his quest was answered by the divine sage Narada, who told about Śrī Rāma, the jewel among the princes of Ikshavaku dynasty. Contemplating the noble thoughts transmitted so kindly by the divine master, sage Vālmīki went to the river Tamasa for a bath. There he noticed a pair of *krauncha* birds in the vicinity of that river's foreshore. The birds were flying there about in togetherness and cooing charmingly. But the very next moment, he saw a hunter killing the male bird of the pair. The other bird set up a sorrowful cry at the fate that had befallen her male companion. The sight aroused the compassion of the sage, and he spontaneously pronounced a verse condemning the hunter for such cruelty. The sage was surprised that his words out of sorrow took a perfect metrical form and had all the elements of emotional poetry. He returned to the hermitage in a gloomy mood, thinking deeply about the *krauncha*-episode and the involuntary poetic creation. Shortly, Brahma appeared before him and confirmed that this poetic excellence was ordained by the divine Supreme Being Himself. He instructed the sage to narrate the heart-pleasing and merit-yielding legend of Lord Sri Rāma and blessed him. The entire legend was revealed to the sage in all its minute details by the divine blessing. Thus, sage Vālmīki became instrumental in penning down the immortal epic of Lord Sri Rāma in the finest and most exquisite poetic expression that the world had ever known. Henceforth, he became known as *Mahārṣi*, a great sage, and his work became known as *Ādi-kavya*, the first piece of genuine Sanskrit poetry.

The twin sons of Sri Rāma, namely Luv and Kush, were the first to receive *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa* from Maharishi Vālmīki. Apart from its excellence as poetic artwork, the composition is revered as a sacred text that presents the sublime message to humankind. While *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa* presents the glories of Lord Rāma, it is regarded as a universal epic with eternal values which concern life in all its dimensions. The life of Maharishi Vālmīki is seen as the illustrious example of the sanctity of the holy name, 'Rāma'. Saint Tulsidas writes in his *Kavitavali* that, "this transformation of the doomed hunter to sweet singing cuckoo is the evidence that the holy name 'Rāma' is more merciful than Lord Rāma Himself."

Vedanta & Science

Different States of Realization of God

The ancient Vedic scripture known as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the most ripened fruit of the Vedic tree of knowledge describes the three aspects of God realization as follows:

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*

Translation: Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this non-dual substance *Brahman* (the attributeless Absolute), *Paramātmā* (the indwelling Supersoul), or *Bhagavān* (the Supreme Lord Himself).

Brahman or the impersonal aspect of God realization is achieved by the students of the *Upanishads*, the philosophical literatures of the Vedas. It is an incomplete realization of God. Similarly, many scientists such as Einstein could grasp the impersonal aspect of God to some degree by their own experience of scientific investigation. Einstein was greatly impressed by observing the order and beauty of the laws of nature, grandeur and the mystical aspects of the universe. He remarked, "I believe in mystery and, frankly, I sometimes face this mystery with great fear. In other words, I think there are many things in the universe that we cannot perceive or penetrate and that also we experience some of the most beautiful things in life in only a very primitive form. Only in relation to these mysteries do I consider myself to be a religious man. But I sense these things deeply... the most beautiful and most profound religious emotion that we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. And this mysticality is the power of all true science... In essence, my religion consists of a humble admiration for this illimitable superior spirit that reveals itself in the slight details that we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power which is revealed in the comprehensible universe forms my idea of God."

Paramātmā realization is achieved by the *yogīs*. *Paramātmā* is an indwelling partial expansion of the personality aspect of God, localized in all living entities primarily for guiding them in every aspect. It is the *Paramātmā* from within that guides, inspires and gives creativity to the individual in scientific discoveries, musical composition and fine artistic works.

*In order to understand
the personal aspect
of God one has to
learn bhakti yoga, a
devotional science
involving nine processes
of spiritual dynamics
(nava-vidhā bhakti).*



However, according to Vedic scriptures, the *Brahman* and the *Paramātmā* realization is a partial understanding of God.

Realization of *Bhagavān* is the realization of the supreme personality aspect of God and this is realized by sincere devotees and servants of God. According to the Vedas, this is the highest aspect of God realization.

These different states of realization of God may be referred to as spiritual dynamics or states in the study of God. The first two aspects can be referred to as intermediary aspects whereas the third state is the final state in the study of the science of God, according to Vedanta. Besides, in the study of the science of life, various spiritual elements such as – nobility, compassion, humility, gentleness, love, respect, morality, etc., are all different aspects of spiritual dynamics. Many scientists and philosophers are attracted by the impersonal aspects of God. However, the *vaiṣṇava* scientific and theological culture of India elaborately describes that in order to understand the personal aspect of God one has to learn *bhakti yoga*, a devotional science involving nine processes of spiritual dynamics (*nava-vidhā bhakti*). The nine devotional activities (*nava-vidhā bhakti*) are – (a) *śravaṇam* (hearing); (b) *kīrtanam* (chanting); (c) *Viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam* (remembering); (d) *pāda-sevanam* (serving the lotus feet); (e) *arcanam* (offering worship); (f) *vandanam* (offering prayers); (g) *dāsyam* (becoming the servant); (h) *sakhyam* (becoming the friend); (i) *ātma-nivedanam* (surrendering everything to the Lord) – which will lead to *prayojana* – attaining the highest goal of life, which is love of God.

[Excerpt from the book, *God is a Person*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata]

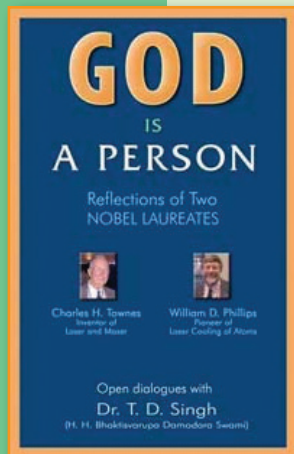
BOOK

Online Store:

<http://store.binstitute.org/product/god-is-a-person/>

GOD IS A PERSON

Softbound; Rs. 200;
Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata



Open reflections of 2 Nobel Laureates: Charles H. Townes, inventor of laser and maser, & William D. Phillips, pioneer of laser cooling of atoms.

- Discover the inner realizations and heart-felt views of two of the most brilliant scientists of our time; and witness how amazingly close to the teachings of the Vedanta they are.
- Be inspired by these deep insights! Reflect on our own perceptions about the nature of the Ultimate Reality or God.
- Realize and appreciate how intellectuals from different backgrounds and religions can share similar awareness and essential conclusions.

Announcement

SYMPOSIUM

Celebrating Life & Works of

His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami

Dr. T D Singh

Founder Director, Bhaktivedanta Institute



Chief Guest & Keynote Address

Prof. Vijay Bhatkar

Chancellor,
Nalanda University

All are cordially invited



📅 09 Dec 2021 | 🕒 1800 - 2100 hrs. IST

📞 ID: 847 1946 0918, Passcode: TDSingh

(ONLINE)

9th December 2021

IST 1800 - 2100 hrs.

Zoom Meeting ID:
847 1946 0918

Passcode:
TDSingh

Panel Session I: The Need for a Synthesis of Science and Spirituality for the Future of Science and Humanity



Prof. Chandra Wickramasinghe
Honorary Professor,
University of Buckingham



Prof. P. B. Sharma
Vice Chancellor,
Amity University



Dr. Hector Rosario
Courtesy Professor,
University of Florida



Dr. Ayush Goyal
Assistant Professor,
Texas A&M University

Panel Session II: Science and Interfaith Dialogue for World Peace



Charles P. Gibbs
Founding Executive Director,
United Religions Initiative



Dr. Foo Check Woo
Former President, Inter-Religious
Organization, Singapore



Dr. Amir Farid Isahak
Former Global Council Member,
United Religions Initiative



Dr. Rodney Sebastian
Assistant Professor,
Manhattan College

Panel Session III: The Study of Consciousness in Understanding the Nature and Origin of Life and Its Implications



Prof. Amit Goswami
Retired Professor,
University of Oregon



Dr. A. K. Mukhopadhyay
Former Professor, All India Institute
of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)



Prof. Mathew Chandrankunnel
Director,
Ecumenical Christian Centre



Prof. Ram Gopal U
Professor,
Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

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