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SCIENCE AND SCIENTIST – A Comprehensive Worldview

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The Western world has led the development of material science for over 200 years. But they have reached an impasse in confronting the problem of consciousness. Scientific knowledge requires a scientist, but regarding knowledge concerning the scientist, they must remain silent.

India has always emphasized knowledge of the conscious self or *atma*. *Vedanta-sutra* begins with the aphorism “*athatho brahma jijnasa*” – now, therefore, inquire about brahma (pure consciousness). Even in the West, the Greek philosopher Socrates stated, “Above all else know the self.” But since the time of Newton, the objective world became the focus of science to the exclusion of the conscious observer or scientist.

This divorce between subject and object could only end badly for both. The resulting duality that was well represented by the French philosopher, Rene Descartes, set forth the philosophical background of modern science that still dominates the thinking of scientists to this day.

But Quantum Mechanics has forced a change in paradigm, where consciousness is now required to be dealt with if one wants to understand the metaphysical implications of that theory. A recent book by American stem cell scientist Robert Lanza, entitled “*Biocentrism*” makes the point that consciousness is fundamental, and everything else rests upon that. This is the same paradigm that Vedanta has held since antiquity.

Scientists of India should be leading the way in the study and presentation of these ideas that the West is only beginning to discover rather than following the hard line materialist

science that has dominated the scene for too long. Not that the material side is to be neglected, but a synthesis is needed that will explain both sides in an overarching world view that does not lose sight of the spiritual dimension of life. Such neglect, we have witnessed, leads to so much disillusionment and destruction in the name of mundane progress.

The following article by our Founder-Director [Dr. T. D. Singh \(Sri Sri Pad Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja\)](#) also addresses this subject very nicely.

LAWS BEYOND THE MATERIAL LAWS OF NATURE

|| By: Dr. T. D. Singh (Sri Sri Pad Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja) ||



[Dr. T. D. Singh \(Sri Sri Pad Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja\)](#)

We know that life possesses qualities beyond the limits of our physical descriptions, in spite of all the claims of its origin from inanimate molecules. A fundamental quality of life is consciousness. To our knowledge, molecular evolutionists have never seriously tried to explain consciousness, because the symptoms of conscious awareness are simply beyond the realm of molecular description.

Here we encounter a strong drawback in the chemical model of life. Out of frustration, some people intentionally try to neglect this. For example, Niels Bohr remarked, “An analysis of the very concept of explanation would naturally begin and end with a renunciation as to explaining our own conscious activity.”

Bohr tried to explain everything by the quantum theory. However, since he felt that consciousness could not be explained by this theory, he had no choice but to “renounce” it. But consciousness exists nonetheless. As Wigner remarked, “Thought processes as well as consciousness are the primary concepts, ... our knowledge of the external world is the content of our consciousness, and... this consciousness therefore cannot be denied.”

If we are to understand the mystery of consciousness, and the many other mysteries of life, it is clear that we cannot remain within the narrow confines of mechanical and molecular thinking. A broader perspective on reality is needed. Dr. Alexis Carrel, a French Nobel Laureate in medicine and physiology, expressed, “The second law of thermodynamics, the law of dissipation of free energy, indispensable at the molecular level, is useless at the psychological level, where the principles of least effort and of maximum pleasure are applied. The concepts of capillarity and of osmotic tension do not throw any light on problems pertaining to consciousness. It is nothing but word play to explain a psychological phenomenon in terms of cell physiology, or of quantum mechanics.”

He further said, “There is strange disparity between the sciences of inert matter and those of life. Astronomy, mechanics and physics are based on concepts which can be expressed, tersely and elegantly, in mathematical language. Such is not the position of biological sciences. Those who investigate the phenomenon of life are as if lost in an

extricable jungle. ... They are crushed under a mass of facts, which they can describe but are incapable of defining in algebraic equations.”

We would therefore like to introduce an alternative view – the Vedantic or Bhagavata Paradigm – of the basic principles underlying nature. We have referred to these basic principles as the absolute truth, or the ultimate cause of all phenomena. Even though most scientific theories deal in practice only with relative descriptions of nature, the goal of science has always been to seek out the ultimate principles underlying reality. Yet, certain far-reaching assumptions about these principles have provided the foundation for all modern scientific research.

The dominant scientific view of the past two hundred years has been that these ultimate principles consist of a few basic natural laws which can be expressed by mathematical formulas. As this view appears to be far too restrictive to account for the phenomena of life, we propose an alternative view which may provide a framework and an inspiration for further scientific research. This is essentially the view of the absolute truth as presented in the ancient Sanskrit text *Bhagavad-gita*. We would like to stress that this view is not being offered as a dogma or as a metaphysical explanatory device incapable of scientific test.

Although many of its features may appear difficult to verify empirically, others have very direct implications concerning what we may expect to observe. This view should serve as a stimulating challenge to the truly scientific spirit that wishes to go beyond the very restrictive framework imposed on our scientific understanding of nature for the past two hundred years.

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