



SCIENCE & SPIRITUAL QUEST

BHAKTIVEDANTA INSTITUTE

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

Science - Spirituality Dialogue Purpose of Life and the Universe



A Discussion with
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 (Henceforth TDS): At the press conference held in March this year when you won the Templeton Prize you made a profound statement: "I believe there is no long-range question more important than the purpose and meaning of our lives and of the universe." Would you please elaborate on that?

Charles H Townes (Henceforth CHT): Well, yes, what is more important? What are we all about? Why are we here? What are we supposed to do? What is our life like? What does it mean? And so on. These are the most important questions, I think. If we understand the answers to these questions, they will determine very much what we must do, what we are doing and why and how we should do it. What is it all about? What is the purpose? Why is the universe here? Why are we here? These are all very basic questions. I think we should ponder them more and take them very seriously, and they are the questions religion attempts to answer. My own view is that God has formed this universe and given us free will to be somewhat like Him, have some of His attributes, to help others and to help humanity and this universe grow – to hopefully improve and increase,

INSIDE

► On the _____
SHOULDERS of the
— **G I A N T S** —



Isaac Newton

► **VEDANTA and**
— **SCIENCE** —



*Fivefold
Truths of the
Vedāntasūtra*

► **NEWS BIRDS**



*Students Workshop at
NIT Kurukshetra,
March 16th, 2013*



"Physics filled me with awe, put me in touch with a sense of original causes. Physics brought me closer to God. That feeling stayed with me throughout my years in science. Whenever one of my students came to me with a scientific project, I asked only one question, 'Will it bring you nearer to God?'"

—Isidor Isaac Rabi, (Nobel Laureate in Physics)

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

and come close to God.

TDS: That's a wonderful viewpoint. At the news conference you also said, "if the universe has a meaning and a purpose, this must be reflected in its structure, functioning and, hence, to science."

CHT: Yes, well, of course some people will argue that the universe has no purpose – it is just a random thing. No purpose at all. So what is it all about? Nothing. Nothing, and that makes life very unimportant. On the other hand, if there is a purpose and if we see the structure of the universe as having really remarkable characteristics, it seems to suggest that there is a purpose. If there is a purpose, then its structure must be closely related to the purpose. So, if we understand the structure and how it works very well, then that may give us some hints as to the purpose of the universe. If we understand the purpose, then that should probably say how it is structured. Those two must come close together, and this is why I say that science and religion are really quite parallel. They must converge. And they can influence and inform each other. The purpose and the structure and how it works must be closely related, and if we understand one very well, then hopefully we can understand the other better.

[Excerpt from the book, *God is a Person, Reflections of two Nobel Laureates, A Discussion between Charles Townes (Nobel Laureate in physics) and Dr. T. D. Singh (Author) Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata]*

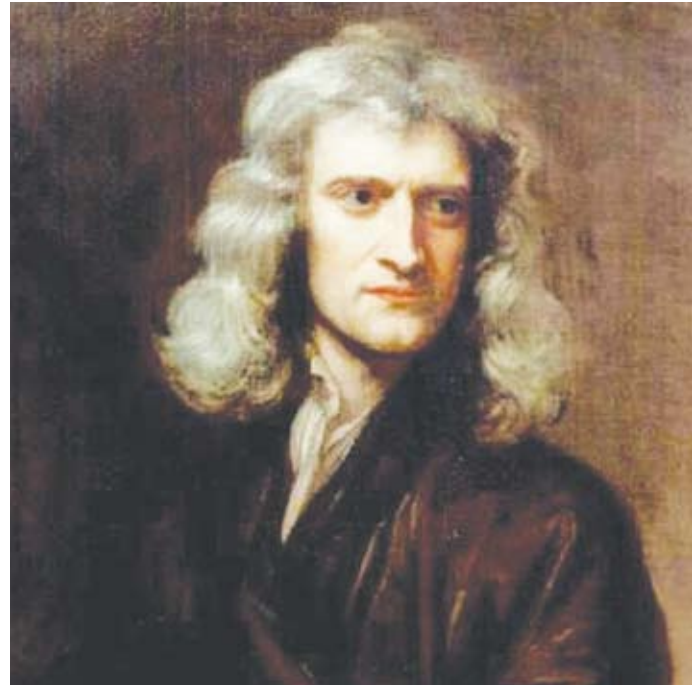
On the Shoulders of the Giants

Isaac Newton

Faith beyond the laboratory

Sir Isaac Newton is a most influential scientist of the 17th century; he laid the foundations of classical mechanics. His valuable contributions include the laws of motion, universal gravitation, calculus, theory of colors and much more. *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* is the masterpiece of Newton's work written in three volumes which contains notes on the theory of gravity and the laws of motion. The sight of a falling apple instigated the thought, "if gravity brought the apple down, why couldn't it reach higher, as high as the Moon?" and this set him to explore the laws governing the motions of planets and to study gravitational forces.

In his quest for the nature of reality, Newton saw no conflict between science and religion like many other great thinkers of the world. His search for the deeper insights of nature's operations was not undertaken for the sake of intellectual pleasure alone, but was an endeavor to reveal God's hidden work in creation and His ways of sustaining and replenishing the created harmonic order. He stated, "Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who sets the planets in motion. God governs all things and knows all that



“Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who sets the planets in motion. ...”

— Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

is or can be done. ...This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being.”

Thus his pursuit to understand the truth was not just confined to his scientific experiments but extended towards the ancient religious scriptures and the study of the sacred architecture described inside. Newton spent a lot of his time in investigating and examining the hidden reality of nature, encoded in the complex symbolic languages of ancient wisdom, also called *prisca sapientia*. In one of his many manuscripts, he writes that, "wisdom and insight are not only to be found in the volume of nature but also in the sacred scriptures, as in Genesis, Psalms, the Book of Isaiah, and others." Newton considered himself one of the specially chosen individuals by God to rediscover and expand the ancient wisdom coded in the religious ancient scriptures. He drew up detailed plans of the architecture of Solomon's Temple to find clues to the secrets of nature in its design and also wrote a number of religious works with respect to the literal interpretation of the Bible.

In his final days the great astronomer who opened up the night sky humbly pointed out that the simple and vast reality of truth is yet to be discovered. He remarked, "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy, playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

Vedanta & Science

Fivefold Truths of the Vedāntasūtra

(... continued from the previous issue-2)

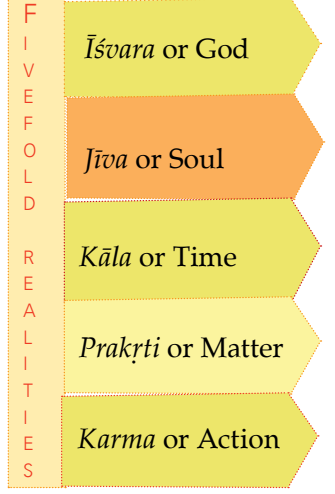
(2) Jīva or Soul: The individual living being or soul is called *jīva* in Sanskrit language. It is also called as *ātma* or *ātman*. Every living being has a *jīva* or soul in it. In other words, all microorganisms, insects, aquatic living beings, plants, reptiles, birds, and so on have souls. Vedanta proclaims with complete scientific and philosophical argument that it is not that only human beings have souls and other forms of life do not.



“... all microorganisms, insects, aquatic living beings, plants, reptiles, birds, and so on have souls.”

In the Bhagavadgītā (15.7), we find: *mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*, meaning, all living beings are eternal and conscious particles of the Supreme Lord. In the pure spiritual form, the living entities are also transcendental and their bodies are also made up of the

three spiritual elements that make up the transcendental body of Īśvara, God. However, the difference between Īśvara, God and *jīva*, the living entity is that the consciousness of the Supreme Being, God is universal (all pervasive) whereas the consciousness of the *jīva*, living being is localized. In other words, the living being has the same spiritual quality as that of the Supreme Lord. But, the capacity of the living being is limited whereas the capacity of the Supreme Being is unlimited.

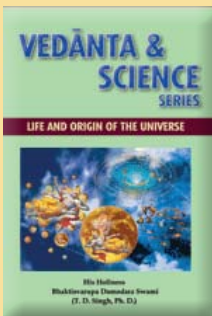


Nowadays, we hear the expression, “Bioengineers or biotechnologists are playing God.” We also see from time to time highly creative human beings in various fields of human culture, such as, arts, science and philosophy. We often say that Mozart is a genius, Shakespear is a genius, Michelangelo is a genius, Tagore is a genius, Gandhi is a genius and Einstein is a genius and so on. Hence, human beings are little gods or godlike, but none of them, however intelligent they may be, will become God, the Supreme Being, even through billions and billions of years of evolution. Also, the individual identity of each living being will remain eternally separate from that of the Supreme Lord. That is the meaning of biodiversity. Also, Vedanta explains that matter, however complex it may be, will never generate consciousness, the inherent symptom of life. Therefore, the Vedantic view of life is quite different from the scientific worldview of life.

(... continued in next issue)

[Excerpt from the book, *Vedanta and Science Series: Life and Origin of the Universe*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata]

BOOK — Vedanta and Science Series: *Life and Origin of the Universe*



What is life? What is the origin of the universe? Is there any meaning and purpose behind the manifestation of life and the universe? Vedanta, the topmost scientific and philosophical treatise of India’s cultural heritage, can provide a vital leap in expanding our comprehension. Vedanta provides an elaborate background to demonstrate that there is a different dimension of reality.

In this unique book, Dr. T. D. Singh (His Holiness Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami) investigates life and the secrets of the origin of the universe and depicts the relevance of Vedantic wisdom in the context of modern scientific and technological developments. His writings, investigating a profound relationship between science and spirituality in the search for a deeper understanding of life and the universe will provide useful insights in the search for the Ultimate Reality.

Softbound; Rs.125/ US\$5;
Bhaktivedanta Institute, Kolkata
Online Store:

<http://www.binstitute.org/bookstore>

Workshop on "The Science of Positive Thinking"
at NIT Kurukshetra, 16th march 2013



More than two hundred students participated in this workshop on "The Science of Positive Thinking".

The various topics covered were "Human excellence through positive thinking" by Prof. P. B. Sharma (VC, Delhi Technological University); "The Art of Becoming Fearless" by Dr. H. K. Mohanta (Assistant Prof., BITS Pilani) and "Faith- The Indispensable Role in Realization" by Dr. Ramjee Repaka (Assistant Prof., IIT Ropar)

1. Delegates from various professional colleges
2. Presentation by students on the topic: The Ultimate Purpose of Life.
3. Cultural Evening



A Seminar on
"Man vs Machine"
at
New Horizon College of Engineering
Bangalore, 9th March 2013

The talk was delivered by Sushant S, Tech Mahindra Ltd, B'lore.. The students and the faculty members expressed great interest for having such presentations in future as well.
(Photo- right)



Editors:

Sameer V, Synopsys, B'lore
Kalicharan N, GE, B'lore
Prabhakar B, LSI R&D, B'lore
Sushant S, Tech Mahindra Ltd, B'lore

Associate Editors:

Abhinava Sinha
Arunava Karmakar
Hari Chandan
Rasmi Mohapatra
Jaynarayan T



BHAKTIVEDANTA INSTITUTE
Regd: RC-8, Raghunathpur, VIP Road
Kolkata 700 059, WB, INDIA
www.binstitute.org

Subscriptions & Queries :
spv.aissq@gmail.com

Centers/Representatives Email

Banaras: dk.aissq@gmail.com
Bangalore: bp.aissq@gmail.com
Delhi: sinha.abhinaba@gmail.com
Guwahati: ru.aissq@gmail.com
Haryana: dwijamanidas@gmail.com
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Rajasthan: hkm.aissq@gmail.com
Kurushetra: arukarmakar@gmail.com