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THE MOST MAGNANIMOUS WELFARE WORKERS

by

Srila Bhakti Nirmal Acharya Maharaja



King Prataparudra told Mahaprabhu's devotees, "Anyhow I will meet with Mahaprabhu. What do I care for my kingdom if I cannot meet with Mahaprabhu? I will put earrings on and become a yogi if I cannot meet with Mahaprabhu." He had such a strong desire: "What do I care for my kingdom!"

Then, every day Nityananda Prabhu, Ramananda Raya, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and others spoke with Mahaprabhu, telling Him about the King's devotion and his desire to meet with the Lord. Mahaprabhu's devotees gave nourishment on both sides; they are the media, and this is the position of Guru.

When Sri Gurudev is coming, he is non-different from Krishna, but he is also the most super servitor of Lord Krishna, and he is coming for what? He is coming for bringing some message, the Lord's message. Krishna Himself told, "I cannot go now, so you go on My behalf. You go and give some message to My *jiva* souls, My friends." It is like this, 'The loving search for the lost servant.' And then we are going to Guru, and Guru is sending our message to the Lord. Sri Gurudev's duty is like this.

What were Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and Nityananda Prabhu doing? Every day they were telling: "Oh Mahaprabhu, King Prataparudra is a very good man, a very nice man. Please give him some mercy." Mahaprabhu answered, "He is a good man, I accept that, but he is a king. He is a king. He is a good man but he is a king! Then how can I see him?"

But through Nityananda Prabhu's mercy King Prataparudra got Mahaprabhu's mercy. At first, instead of meeting the King, Mahaprabhu agreed to meet with the King's son. Before going to meet with the Lord, Nityananda Prabhu told his son, "You can change your royal clothing into devotee clothing and if Mahaprabhu sees you, He will give His mercy to you."

Mahaprabhu gave His mercy, and immediately when the son returned from meeting Mahaprabhu, King Prataparudra embraced him and was so happy to see he had received the mercy of Mahaprabhu. Another time Nityananda Prabhu sent

the king some old clothing of Mahaprabhu, and the king would worship that clothing. In many ways King Prataparudra showed so much devotion for Mahaprabhu.

Also Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya advised the king how he could meet with Mahaprabhu:



Rathayatra in Puri Dham

King Pratapudra followed his advice, and one of the slokas was:

*tava kathamrtam tapta jivanam
kavibhir iditam kalmasapanam
sravana mangalam srimad atatam
bhuvi grnanti ye bhurida janah*

Translation: O, Krishna, the nectar of Your words and the narra-

“When Mahaprabhu is dancing and chanting in front of the chariot on the day of Rathayatra, He will become senseless, overwhelmed with *astattvika vikar*, the eight symptoms of ecstasy. At that time, when He falls down with no sense, you will go in the dress of a devotee and massage His feet and chant these slokas from *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.”

tions of Your Pastimes give life to us, who are always suffering in this material world. This nectar is broadcast all over the world by great souls, and it removes all sinful reactions. It is all-auspicious and filled with spiritual power. Those who spread this message of Godhead are certainly doing the greatest relief work for human society and are the most magnanimous welfare workers.” (*Srimad Bhagavatam: 10.31.9*).

When he recited this *sloka*, Mahaprabhu embraced him, saying “*Bhuridah, bhuridah!*” ‘*Bhurida*’ means who is the most generous, who is the greatest donor in this world, and that person is our best friend. And whoever is distributing the Krishna-*katha* all over the world is the greatest donor, ‘*bhuridah*’. Mahaprabhu embraced the King saying, “Oh you are the most magnanimous, because you are distributing Krishna consciousness.”

Some people say, “Oh, who is giving some shirt, giving some pants—he is the great donor.” Some institutions are telling, “We are giving some medicine, so we are great donors.” But who is the greatest donor? Srila Param Guru Maharaj (Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaja) told one time, “Sometimes when the flood is coming some local men come to me, ‘Maharaj, you have a big temple, why are you not giving some donation to us for the flood victims?’ “ Param Guru Maharaj replied, “What we are giving to the *jiva* souls all over the world is the highest thing; whoever takes this will not suffer in his life such things as floods.”

Bhuvi grnanti ye bhurida janah, those who are distributing the *krsna-katha* are the greatest donors in this world.

SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION, INQUIRY AND UNIQUENESS OF HUMAN LIFE

by

Srila Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Maharaja (T. D. Singh, Ph.D.)



Inquiry, *jijnasa*, is another fundamental quality of life. Everyone inquires about something or the other. In the course of life, a person experiences different phases like old age, disease and many kinds of sufferings. He then inquires, “Why am I suffering?” Therefore, he wants to find out the solution to these problems. Every research work is a kind of inquiry. Humanity begins when this sort of inquiry is awakened in one’s mind. This quest for understanding the deeper meaning of life is the turning point in the life of individuals.

Therefore, inquiry forms the most important process of acquiring knowledge. We want to know about things that are beyond what

we can see conventionally. We invent electron microscope, telescope, etc., to satisfy our curiosity. But this is not enough. Our senses and extended senses are still very limited.

Can a bird inquire about the meaning of its existence? Innocent and ordinary living beings like birds and animals inquire only of bodily needs. They inquire, ‘where is water?, where is food?, where is shelter?’, and so on. However, they do not have the capacity to inquire about the deeper purpose and meaning of life. But in the human form of life, one is endowed with the unique ability to inquire beyond these bodily needs. This is the special and unique qualification of the human form of life.



Can a Bird Inquire About the Meaning of its Existence?



When a child is growing up, he inquires from his parents about many things around him, such as ‘what is this?’, ‘what is that?’, etc. In this way, the child gathers knowledge from his parents. Since the conscious intelligence is fully developed, human beings can make different levels of inquiry including the deeper questions about life. The most important inquiry of human life should be to find out about the Absolute Truth, *jivasya*

*tattvajijnasa (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.10).*¹

The ability to inquire about the ultimate truth of life makes the human being uniquely different from all other forms of life. Newton asked why the apple did fall. As an answer to this question, he discovered the law of gravitation. Thus *Vedanta* emphasizes that the primary subject matter of the human form of life is to inquire about the science of Absolute Truth, God.



Sir Isaac Newton

The *Katha Upanisad* (1.3.14) in a very strongly and carefully worded tone makes a clarion call to all human beings in the following *sloka*:

*uttistha jagrataprapya varan nibodhata
ksurasya dhara nisita duratyaya
durgam pathas tat kavayo vadanti*

Translation: Arise! Awake! Please try to understand the boon that you now have in this human form of life. The path of spiritual realization is very difficult; it is sharp like a razor’s edge, difficult to tread and hard to cross, so say the learned Sages.

‘Who am I?’, ‘what is the Supreme Absolute Truth?’, ‘what is the origin of life?’, ‘what is existence?’, ‘what will be the fate of the human soul when the body dies?’ are some of the basic questions that a human being can inquire. Human life is the result of spiritual evolution.

Presently, scientific inquiry without spiritual knowledge is one-sided. All forms of human inquiry should be utilized in search for Absolute Truth, God. Hence, the purpose of all sciences should be to inquire about the nature of God. A physicist should inquire: what is the real source of the laws of nature? A chemist can inquire: who is the Supreme Chemist behind all the wonderful molecules, DNA, chlorophyll, proteins, etc.? *Vedanta* explains that if we do research far enough, we will find that the ultimate source is God. Thus, *Vedanta* cautions that intelligent people should not be misled by the temporary and incomplete pronouncements of atheistic scientists who try to remove God from everything. This

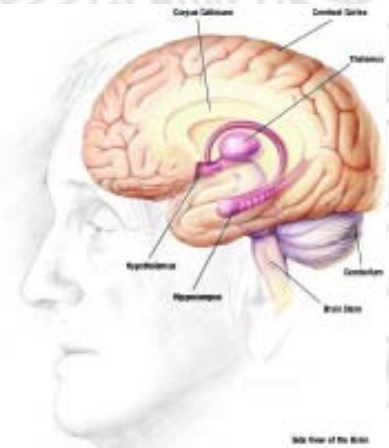
will be the proper use of the modern scientific knowledge. When one realizes the Absolute Truth through such an inquiry, he will understand the actual basis of reality. And then, his duty is to glorify the Supreme Lord through the scientific understanding. This is the secret and the real platform of happiness. This is what Narada Muni, the foremost transcendentalist instructed his disciple, Vyasadeva, the literary incarnation of the Supreme Lord in the *Bhagavata Purana*, the natural commentary on the *Vedantasutra*.²



Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein once remarked, “*The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day.*”³

In the human form of life, the consciousness (*cetana*), intelligence (*buddhi*), mind (*manas*), senses (*indriyas*) are fully developed. Thus, human being is totally equipped to make deepest *jijnasa* (inquiry), the spiritual inquiry. A similar message echoes in the statement of Albert Einstein who states that knowing the plan of God is most important and the rest are details.⁴ By this inquiry, *sambandha*, the relationship between the self and God will be established and the pure spiritual knowledge of the self will be understood. *Isa Upanisad* further declares, *Isavasyamidam sarvam*, everything belongs to the Supreme Lord. Therefore, everything should be used, including the works of the scientists and all the leaders of the world in the service of the Supreme Lord. In a nutshell, this is the view of *Vedanta* regarding the prime duty of humanity.



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A SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING OF CONCEPT

by

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D.



Hegel considers the Concept (in German *Begriffe*) to be a spiritual entity - the soul, if you will, of a thing. Looked at in another way it may be considered (although not precisely) like the essence of a thing. It is what makes the thing whatever it is. Thus if we took the Concept of a room (let's say "roomness") away from a thing we would no longer have a room but something

else. In this sense the Concept is essential to the being of anything. As soon as we determine "what" a thing is we are involved with its Concept. The Concept is the "whatness" of things.

When a baby experiences life inside a room, what does it experience? It has no Concept of room so it feels perhaps warmth, certain colors of light, maybe a sense of security since it has its needs met there. But it has not established the Concept of room – so it does not experience a room. It experiences sensations only. The sensations of a room do not a room make! In a room, or outside under the stars, or at a baseball stadium we experience sensations but without a Concept to associate with those sensations we cannot say or think room, outside, stadium, etc.



The body without the vivifying soul is simply a dead lump. If we look at the body from a molecular viewpoint it is a swarm of molecules and biochemical reactions. We can tease and torment every tissue and cell but in the end we will find only atoms and electrons. As a Nobel Laureate in biochemistry, Albert Szent-Györgyi once commented that despite having analyzed living organisms in detail, life somehow just slipped through his fingers. The Concept like the soul is absolutely necessary if one is to understand what life is, or what it is to be human or an animal, etc. The sensuous thing gives no indication of that.

The Concept, when we study the Logic, will be seen to involve Being. Therefore there is no question that the Concept is not real or actual. It IS. Although its being is not something that can be apprehended by the senses, being is certainly one of its qualities. And so is activity or determination. Therefore it is actual (active). Its action is the activity of thinking that is involved in the Concept. Because it is active, movement is present. Where there is movement there are moments – like the still images of a movie film. These moments are the differentiation of the Concept, logical

moments that thought passes through in its full coverage of the Concept. All of this together, the moments, the movement of thinking, and the sublimation of these in a unified Concept go into making what we call a Concept.

The immediate sense experience of an object is abstract in comparison with this. Although there are colors, feelings, etc. in the sense experience of objects, to thought the immediate is mere abstraction – and it is with thought that we are concerned in philosophy. The immediate has its logical connection with the mediate, of which one makes no sense without the other. To consider the immediate independent of mediation is therefore pure abstraction from the actual unity that obtains between the two.

If one insists on leaving the rational or logical aside and dealing only with the sense experience per se, then one enters the non-rational experience of things and reason is lost. Maintaining a purely conceptual standpoint in the realm of reason does not mean that the sensuous is ignored or neglected. Rather it is for the first time comprehended fully. If one chooses to leave reason behind for the sake of pure sensuous apprehension then one may be consigned to merely kicking stones and beating dead horses. But thinking will not simply remain inactive for long without eventually seeking its own element.

If we consider the Concept to be the actual essence of things, then in that sense it is more real than the thing itself – or what it really is. Of course, essence makes no sense unless there is something there that we can speak of as having an essence. One requires the other. Yet still we do make the distinction that what a thing is *essentially* is the actual reality of that thing. However, the Concept is different from essence and in the Logic we will find that it is actually the sublimation of being and essence. I am only using the term essence here since it is perhaps more readily understood at this stage than Concept. Strictly speaking or scientifically speaking the Concept and essence are not the same thing.

One more point should be made before closing. The term Notion has been used to translate *Begriffe*. This is not correct and even misleading. Notion implies a very vague impression of things but the scientific mind of Hegel was intent on bringing clarity and detailed development to philosophy. *Begriffe* means literally "to grasp." When we speak of grasping something we refer not only to something we do with our hand but also with our mind. Thus when we grasp something we mean that whatever is being explained has become clear to us. This clarity and precision is what Hegel means by Concept.

Vorstellung means representation, or literally "stands for." As we have explained above the Concept is not merely a representation that stands for the thing that it is the Concept of. Rather the Concept is what makes the thing whatever it is. Therefore to conceive of the Concept as merely an abstract representation of things is another erroneous interpretation of Hegel. The term *Vorstellung* or representation has its place in Hegel's philosophy but it is to be carefully distinguished from *Begriffe* or Concept.

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