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Science and Scientist

Sadhu Sanga

With utmost sincerity and to the best of our knowledge, however, we should see not to submit to a false agent. Here of course, we can't help ourselves very much

SRI GURU – DIVINE MESSENGER OF IMMORTAL HOPE

by

Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaja



To err is human. To err is inevitable for all, being not perfect. Still, no one wants to remain imperfect. There is an element within all that is animate that tends towards perfection. If it were not so, we would feel no want at all. Our tendency towards perfection is certainly very weak and limited; otherwise we could attain the goal at once. Our limited capacity and tendency for perfection makes room for the

guide or *guru*.

The imperfect is not so if it is not in need of help, and that also from beyond itself. The perfect is not perfect if He cannot assert Himself or help others, and that too, of His own accord. So the guidance to perfection or Absolute Truth is necessarily a function of the absolute Himself, and the divine agent through whom this function manifests is *Sri Guru*, or the divine guide.

For a seeker of the Absolute Truth, submission to the *guru* is unavoidable. A class of thinkers believe, however, that when scientific research is possible, why cannot higher spiritual knowledge also be evolved from within? Such people are ignorant of the most essential nature of absolute knowledge, that He alone is the Absolute Subject and all else including ourselves constitutionally stand only as an object to His omniscient vision. It is impossible for the eye to see the mind; the eye can have connection with the mind when the mind cares to mind it. In a similar way, our connection with absolute knowledge depends mainly on His sweet will. We must solely depend on His agent, the spiritual master, through whom He likes to distribute Himself.

Our human society with its finest culture forms but an infinitesimal part of the dynamic absolute. How, except by the direct and positive method of revelation, dare we hope to comprehend or evolve any conception of the supernatural knowledge of the unconditioned infinite? All intellectual giants prove themselves but pygmies before the Absolute Omniscient Omnipotence who reserves the right to give Himself away through His own agents alone.

because, in our present state, we are mainly guided by our previous samskara, our acquired nature. “Birds of the same feather flock together.” Yet, although we are generally overpowered by habit, there is still the possibility of free choice to a certain extent, especially in the human species, otherwise correction becomes impossible, and punishment mere vengeance. Reality can assert itself. Light does not require darkness for its positive proof. The sun by itself can establish its supremacy over all other lights. Before an open and unbiased eye, the *sad guru* (real guide) shines above all professors of phenomenon.

Sri Guru manifests himself mainly in a twofold way—as the director from within and the preceptor from without. Both functions of the absolute help an individual soul—a disciple—to reach the absolute goal. In our fallen state we cannot catch the proper direction to the inner guide, so the merciful manifestation of the preceptor without is our sole help and hope. But at the same time it is only by the grace of the *guru* within that we can recognize the real preceptor without and submit to his holy feet.

A bona fide disciple must always remain fully awake to the fact that his highest spiritual fortune is but a gracious grant from the Absolute Lord, and not a matter of right to be demanded or fought out. Constitutionally, we are equipped only to be proper recipients of God’s favor. In this connection it should be clearly understood that an individual soul can never be substantially the same as the Absolute Person. Not even in his liberated or fully realized condition can an individual soul be one with Godhead. The misconception of oneness has been introduced due to the slothful nondiscrimination of the Absolute Personality from the luminous orb around His eternal, spiritual, and blissful home. In fact, an individual soul constitutes only a part of a particular power of intermediate value of the Supreme Lord, and as such he is capable of being converted from both sides. He differs from the Absolute

Entity both in quantity and quality, whose mere existence is dependent upon the Absolute. In other words, the Absolute, Lord Krishna, is the master and the individual *jiva* soul is His constitutional subordinate or servant.

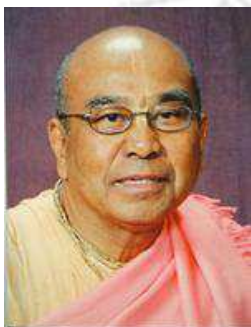
Such a relationship is constant and really wholesome for the *jiva*. The apprehension of slavery does not arise because of his free choice and immense positive gain. The freedom and individuality of the *jiva* are not only unharmed by surrender to the Absolute Good, but they really thrive in Him alone. Individual freedom and interest are the part and parcel of those who are of the absolute, and so they are quite at home there, as a fish is at home in water or an animal in a healthy atmosphere. But the freedom as well as all other qualities of the Supreme Personality are unlimited and transcendental, and so only by their partial functions they harmonize all relative entities.

Sri guru is not exclusively the same as the Supreme Lord Himself, but he fully represents the essence of the whole normal potency and embodies the most comprehensive and excellent service and favor of the Lord. As he is the fittest servitor of the Lord, he is empowered by the Lord to reinstate all misguided souls to their best interest. So *guru* is the divine messenger of immortal hope and joy in this mortal and miserable world. His advent is the most auspicious and happy event to the suffering animation, and can be compared to the rising of the morning star that can guide the traveller lost in the desert. A gentle touch of *Sri guru*’s merciful hand can wipe away the incessant tears from all weeping eyes. A patriot or philanthropist makes the problem only worse in his frantic and futile attempt to alleviate the deep-rooted pain of a suffering soul, as an ignorant doctor does in eagerly handling an unfortunate patient. Oh the day when this poor soul realizes the causeless grace of *Sri gurudeva*.

ETHICS AND HUMAN VALUES – A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO CHEMICAL EVOLUTION

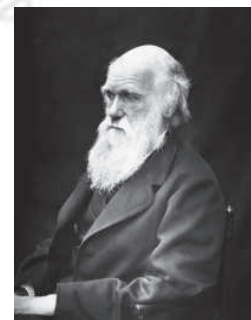
by

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



Molecules lack inherent purpose and meaning. Yet we give value to life. A reciprocal feeling of love and care exists among people and among other living entities. Parents think about their children; a nation thinks about the welfare of its subjects. Great sages think about the welfare of all living entities—starting from an ant up to man. There can be no value without purpose and meaning. However, the doctrine of the chemical nature of life reduces life to complete meaninglessness. Since this is contrary to the truth, it generates a sense of emptiness and unhappiness in one’s subliminal mind. This is vividly

“But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry: I have tried lately to read Shakespeare and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music.... The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.”



– Charles Darwin

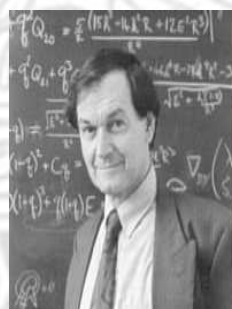
illustrated in the case of Darwin, the father of the doctrine of evolution. He developed, in his own words, a “curious and lamentable loss of the higher aesthetic tastes.”[1] He expressed this loss in his autobiography: “I have said in one respect my mind has changed during the last twenty or thirty years. Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, gave me great pleasure, and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare.... I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry: I have tried lately to read Shakespeare and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music.... My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive ... The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.”[2]

It is ironic that Darwin should have expressed these thoughts. Why should man, if he is a product of molecular pushes and pulls, worry about happiness or unhappiness? Why should people busy their minds about moral and ethical values? Why should it be necessary to establish educational institutions? Why do problems like those of disease, drugs, alcoholism, violence, terrorism, crime, abortion, and euthanasia bother our minds?

Educated people have shown a renewed concern for professional ethics and human values.[3] This is a direct challenge to the doctrine of the molecular character of life. Great concern has been expressed over: the ban of pesticides, such as DDT that may cause cancer when present in food; the chlorofluorocarbon controversy—skin cancer may be caused by the depletion of the ozone layer in the stratosphere; the ban of synthetic sweeteners—cyclamate and saccharin, for example, may cause cancer; recombinant DNA research—when a gene is transferred from one organism to another, harmful and uncontrollable organisms might escape.

The first Bioethics Center was formed at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., in 1971 for concerned scientists who wanted to study perplexing biomedical problems like genetic engineering and organ transplants.[4] A growing concern has developed over bioethical problems such as *in vitro* fertilization of human eggs and their implantation, cloning, and so on. Because of such concerns, the Illinois Institute of Technology had set up a Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions.[5] These are new additions to academic curricula. If humanity is a product of molecular pushes and pulls, there is no reason why people should be concerned about the moral and ethical values of life. But every sensible person knows that there is value in life. Life *per se* is full of meaning and full of purpose.

If humanity is a product of molecular pushes and pulls, there is no reason why people should be concerned about the moral and ethical values of life. But every sensible person knows that there is value in life. Life per se is full of meaning and full of purpose.



“The legal issue of ‘responsibility’ seems to imply that there is indeed, within each of us, some kind of an independent ‘self’ with its own responsibilities and, by implications, rights – whose actions are not attributable to inheritance, environment, or chance.” – Roger Penrose

Roger Penrose, the world renowned mathematician from the University of Oxford, has profoundly expressed, “The issue of ‘responsibility’ raises deep philosophical questions concerning the ultimate causes of our behavior.... Is the matter of ‘responsibility’ merely one of convenience of terminology, or is there actually something else – a ‘self’ lying beyond all such influences – which exerts a control over our actions? The legal issue of ‘responsibility’ seems to imply that there is indeed, within each of us, some kind of an independent ‘self’ with its own responsibilities – and, by implications, rights – whose actions are not attributable to inheritance, environment, or chance. If it is other than a mere convenience of language that we speak as though there were such an independent ‘self’, then there must be an ingredient missing from our present-day physical understandings. The discovery of such an ingredient would surely profoundly alter our scientific outlook.”[6]

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DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ARGUMENTATIVE AND CONCEPTUAL THINKING

by

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D.



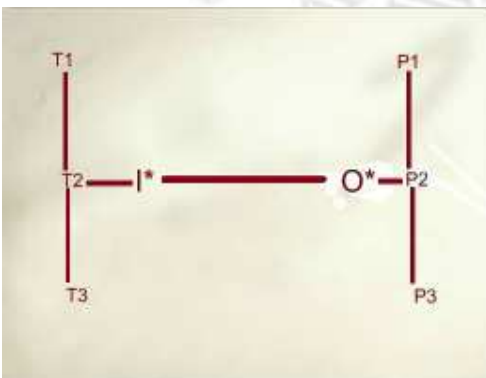
Argumentative thinking has two aspects, viz. positive and negative. Such thinking effectively ignores the content since the actual object is considered “out there” beyond the subjective thinking that is going on “in here” or inside oneself or the finite mind. No explicit connection is established between the subjective and objective worlds or realms. This

type of thinking is of necessity concerned only with its own knowing or with itself, thus Hegel calls this vanity. In this sense it is indifferent to what is outside it, thus it is abstract thought – thought that is stripped from its actual content. This difference or indifference is the negative aspect of argumentative thinking. In addition, we may understand it positively as a union/unity with an “I think” or thinking ego conjoined immediately to an objective content. The objective content is supposed to be the truth that the subjective thinking is to discover or recreate for itself in its subjectivity. One understands the truth when thinking subjectivity is identical with the objective content. However, this identity is not one of substantial identity but formal only. In other words, subjective understanding and objective actuality may be the same in form but are essentially different in substance – one in the medium of thought, the other in the medium of being. A correspondence is merely assumed between these two.

Thus we may state the two aspects of argumentative thinking as:

- 1) Negative: the thinking ego or “I think” opposed to or negatively related to a content.
- 2) Positive: the unity or assumed correspondence between the real thing with its properties and the ideality of the thinking ego.

Of notable interest here is that there is a total lack of an explicit principle to explain the correspondence between the real and ideal realms. The senses that are supposed to interface between the subjective and objective realms serve as a conduit between the two, but how the objective effects or enters into the subjective or vice versa is not explicitly known, or in other words this aspect is effectively ignored. This is the defect of this model for knowing or establishing truth.



To help us better see what is happening let us draw a diagram of the situation. In this diagram the I with its thoughts (T1, T2, T3, etc.) is opposed to an object O with its

properties (P1, P2, P3, etc.). Note that next to the I and the O are their respective marks (*). This mark means that the ego or I is in reality an abstract entity like a point. In other words, ala Hume and Kant the ego is a formal unity of which only its thoughts are determinable, the ego itself is beyond determination. The same is true for the thing or object since we can only determine the various properties of a thing while that substantial being that supposedly unifies the properties is an unknown abstract thing-in-itself. For Kant, such unification of the properties arises from the unity of the abstract ego itself. (The finer details of this process requires a separate paper dealing with the thing and its properties.)

In other words, by determining a sugar cube before me as white, cubical, sweet, crystalline, etc. I am left with a collection of properties that are unified only by the thinking ego itself. What is left over after I abstract all its properties is a mere thing-in-itself that I cannot say what it is, only that it “is” or must be there since that is the way I originally started my whole thinking, i.e. that was my original assumption. This undeterminable thing-in-itself that is left over is represented by its mark.

Of course, today we may say that there are molecules, atoms and electrons that are at the base of the various properties we observe. However, even these entities have properties so that ultimately we are left with the same situation since that which holds the properties as such is undetectable or undetermined except to say that such an entity “is”. That pure ‘being-there’ is merely the abstract thought of existence itself, however, argumentative thinking is not aware of it as its own thought.

Both the I with its thoughts and the thing with its properties have the form of a substantial Subject with its accidental Predicates. This arises from the form of knowing or determination associated with the proposition: the Subject is the Predicate. Argumentative thinking holds its content apart from itself, then analyzes this content in the form of propositions. For example, a sugar cube is considered in the following way:

1. It is white
2. It is sweet
3. It is cubical
4. etc.

Each statement is in the form of the proposition: The Subject is the Predicate.

We also notice here that this type of thinking does not relate one property to another. It simply lists them. It arbitrarily picks up new properties from its own thinking without relying on any order for its determinations. Its only concern is to find ever-newer determinations in this haphazard and undefined way from its own subjectivity. These determinations expressed as propositions are therefore not developed in a scientific way from the contents and are therefore not related to each other in any systematic way either. This whole approach to ascertaining truth is therefore highly unsystematic and unscientific.

In order to establish a more systematic model of thinking and establishing truth Hegel presents the Concept and conceptual thinking. The identity that argumentative thinking merely assumes between the subjective thought determinations of the ego and the properties of the object is instead considered by conceptual thinking to be an apriori synthetic unity, in which apriori means that the unity is originally already existing. In this sense, “synthetic” is misleading since the unity exists as a whole prior to any synthesis of its parts. Thus we do not have the problem of how to relate the one to the other, they will already be intrinsically related. This relation or relating is a process – an activity, and the unity is a result of this activity. But we must understand that this activity is actually negative activity or thinking. What appears in argumentative thinking to be the thinking of the ego opposed to an object, is thus understood in conceptual thinking to be an I-object unity. In other words, we may take the diagram above and think of the Concept as the intrinsic dynamic unity of all that is contained therein. (We have yet to explicitly develop the specific movement that is involved in each case; we are presenting things in a general way here.)

Because it may be confusing to refer to the object as having an ego, we call it the self of the object, as when we refer to the object “itself.” The thinking or negative activity that goes on in the self-object unity that we call the Concept is a self-thinking or self-determining. We no longer have to refer to a separate ego that is doing the thinking against an external object. Furthermore, the self-determining Concept does not make its determinations based on the fixed form of the proposition. Rather we have to consider the dialectical relation between the Subject and Predicate in the propositional form, where the Subject goes into the Predicate, the Predicate becomes the substantial and the Subject becomes the Predicate, then the counterthrust back to the Subject which again becomes the substantial.

This can all be more easily understood in terms of an example. Thus if we have the proposition (judgment) that “the swan is white”, we seem to lose the subject (Swan) in the predicate (white). In other words, we seem to identify the subject with the predicate and imply that the swan (Subject) is only whiteness itself (the Predicate). The copula “is” takes on the meaning of identity. When thought confronts this shock, which it states but does not mean, it immediately suffers a counterthrust and returns back to the Subject (swan) as the substantial ground of its judgment. This to and fro activity of thought goes on unnoticed in ordinary thinking or adjudging. The whole movement and the various moments that are included within it now form the basic Truth or actuality. Thus we have the self-object or Concept as our apriori synthetic unity.

Because of this unity, the thought-property relation of argumentative thinking will form the categories. In addition the form of the proposition upon which argumentative thinking is based must be comprehended conceptually. It is this Concept along with its various moments and movements when systematically developed and comprehended that form both the method and content of Science. The activity that goes on in all of this is called conceptual thinking.



Hegel

In this whole ascent to conceptual thinking from the platform of argumentative thinking we must recognize that the concept of an ego that is thinking has been sublimated in the self-thinking or self-determining Concept. Much of the confusion that attends the study of Hegelian philosophy comes from misunderstanding this basic difference between the argumentative thinking of

the ego and the conceptual thinking of or in the Concept. There will be a tendency to fall back into argumentative thinking whenever the term “thinking” is encountered. This is due to bad habit and failure to understand the difference as explained above and what is actually being referred to when we mention conceptual thinking.

Of course it would be better to assimilate this as basic to our thinking, and that will come with practice as one studies the development found for example in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* [1]. It may help to realize that thinking is going on at an absolute level or in other words as Absolute Truth itself. This means that we can understand it as the thinking of God, in which God and God’s thinking are identical in their difference. Because we are finite parts of God, just as a drop of water is part of the ocean, the activity of the Absolute is going on within us as well as without us, just as the activity of the ocean affects the drop as much as the drop, or a large number of them, affect the ocean. It is this interpenetrating relationship or activity between the infinite and finite that we refer to as “our” thinking. This does not deny the freedom or independence of the finite self, but this can only be fully understood when we develop the Concept of God and the various determinations of unity, multiplicity, identity, difference, etc. that are all part of that most concrete of all concepts (God) and consequently the most difficult to comprehend.

Hegel gives the example of a seed to explain the development of the Concept. A seed contains all the determinations of a full grown tree. The various aspects of the tree are not explicitly present in miniature form in the seed, but implicitly. In the same way the Concept contains the full determinations of its object. The development occurs by way of sublimation of previous determinations by later ones. Furthermore the process is circular so that when the end is reached it cycles back to the beginning, just as the seed produces the tree which again produces a fruit and seed. The task in studying the *Phenomenology* is to follow the development of consciousness (or knowing) as a subject-object relationship in coming to its dynamic unity – this whole process and its result – as the Concept.

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