

## Reality Has Its Own Purpose In and For Itself

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In a recent article by Deepak Chopra, MD, “Can We Evolve Beyond Evolution? We Have To” [1] it was mentioned that

“-- The reality we accept is a human construct.”

“-- We should see ourselves as conscious creators who imbue reality with our own purposes.”

While many people think this way there are also those who believe reality is fixed in stone beyond whatever they may think of it. To some extent both are right. We do have the freedom to interpret what we experience, and mind does play a role in determining what the senses observe. At the same time reality doesn't just disappear when we do not perceive it. Our house is still there when we go to work for several hours. For instance, it could burn down when we are not there. So it is not all a human construct, and as for purposes they also are not solely created by us.

A more satisfactory conception would be one that includes and harmonizes both the idealism of a mind or consciousness based creation of reality, and the realism of the inherent purposefulness of an already existing reality of which we are part and parcel.

The reality people experience is a human construct insofar as it is limited to sensuous perception of the phenomenal world of appearance, as well as the circumscribed judgments of finite understanding. However, this does not reach to the noumenal Reality in and for itself beyond or behind its apparent or phenomenal surface. In India the *mayavad* philosophy of *Brahman Satyam, Jagat Mithyā* claims that Reality is purely a product of human misconception and only *Brahman* as mere impersonal consciousness (an oxymoron since consciousness is the essence of personality) is the absolute reality or truth. This philosophy, also called *kevaladvaita*, however, does not provide an alternative to material reductionism but merely an alternative reductionism. Instead of reducing everything to matter it proposes to reduce everything to impersonal

consciousness. In fact, what is needed is an alternative way of thinking that is not based solely on the judgments of a finite ego that is found, for instance, in the abstract thinking of Kantian philosophy in the West as well as in the *kevaladvaita* interpretations of Shankaracharya in the East.

If we consider that Reality already and always exists by and for itself then Reality or its purpose does not have to be created by humans. Rather humans are one of the many products or creations of a Reality that exists for itself, i.e. as self-conscious being for itself or having its own purposes. Because we are part and parcel of a self-conscious Reality we are also conscious. Because Reality is also by itself (or in itself), it is substance. Thus Reality 'is' or exists as self-conscious substance and therefore finite instances of it are conscious substances or thinking beings. Yet these instances are not all at the same level of consciousness but fall within a spectrum of consciousness manifested as different forms of life. This is because Self-conscious Reality is not abstractly or one-sidedly monistic or pure oneness but is itself differentiated within itself having many qualities or what is called Personality. Personality is self-consciousness that is a oneness or Individual that also contains varieties or differences within it.

Everyone born in India within the Hindu tradition has heard of *santana dharma*. It means there is already an eternal purpose (order) in Reality that is neither created nor destroyed at any time. According to the *Bhagavad-gita* 2.16, whatever is created is temporal - only a fleeting reality, like a dream. Thus the purposes humans create are just dreams, while the eternal purpose or *sanatan dharma* is the universal order or purpose valid for all creation and creatures regardless of their individual purposes. The *Bhagavad-gita* explains that living solely according to self-created purposes not in accord with *sanatan dharma* is called *Maya* or illusion.

It may be more difficult for atheists to comprehend that Reality has its own order, purpose or being-for-itself, because Reality for them may be understood merely as something impersonal and indifferent. Yet if the Ultimate or Absolute Reality is sentient substance (Thinking Being) it must have will or purpose. That is not the same as the impersonal reified laws that scientific discovery seek as the universal or intelligible laws of Nature. However, what we may call Divine or Infinite Reason that belongs to Reality is not the same as finite reason that the human products/instances of Reality may create for themselves. The later are living like bubbles (with themselves as the center) on the ocean of Reality or Truth. This is the nature of *Maya*. However, we are not apart from Reality but an

implicit part of it. A very different attitude toward Reality is required to understand that difference.

The consequence of the conception that "we create our own reality" is already producing its results all over the world. When the bubbles of individuals or groups collide with each other the result is jealousy, war, hypocrisy, and strife. This is what philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1678) called 'the war of all against all' (L. *bellum omnium contra omnes*). This egoist conception is based on the limited idea of the being of Reality for one's own finite consciousness, that misses the universal being-for-self of Reality for its own self, which is infinite or the same for everyone and everything. Thus even if we accept the principle that we create our own reality (according to whatever makes us happy), the idea of individually centered realities leads to destructive consequences in the real world. The Bhakti Vedanta alternative is for each to create or understand an unselfishly directed Theo-centric Reality with its own purpose that can harmonize the freedom of each individual to produce a harmonizing Reality in which all may live peacefully. In other words creating your own reality doesn't have to be selfishly oriented which leads to an ultimately false or illusory happiness, but Theo-centric which leads to humility, love and a peaceful harmonious life.

In order to regain their connection with Reality one must burst their own bubble of self-centered "reality" and surrender to their eternal constitutional purpose or *sanatan dharma*, which is not to be identified with any political, social, or other partisan religious group. Rather it is that purpose which belongs to all such groups, individuals and even inanimate instances of Reality within the cosmic and trans-cosmic order.

You may rightly inquire what the universal purpose is that the individual must dovetail with the universal Will. Science when properly conceived is an attempt to discover the order or laws that implicitly govern Nature, but modern science instead of deriving those laws from the observations of Nature have retreated from Nature into their own theories, ideologies and models of Nature. Thus rather than concluding from natural observation that 'life comes only from life,' they create an ideological scenario in which they have now forced themselves to think 'life comes from matter' in complete opposition to what is observed in Nature.

But the rational study of Nature is not the only way to understand the universal Will. Those wise and saintly souls who have plumbed the depths of Reality also have something to say about these things. We can learn from them if we have

the intelligence to understand their contribution to human knowledge of the most profound spiritual nature of Man beyond the immediate surface of appearing Nature. Those great saints and sages, spiritual scientists, have recorded their discoveries in revered books called scriptures or revealed knowledge. Their understanding of true knowledge or knowledge of the truth is that it is always self-revealing, being the inherent constitutional nature of one's own true self and the cosmos.

As Krishna, the Name of the self-revealing Reality, explains at the end of the *Bhagavad-gita* 18.66, all individually motivated dharmas or purposes must be renounced (*sarvva dharmam parityaga*) and one must surrender (*sharanam*) to Him, the self-conscious Reality that the various religions call God. This surrender entails submitting one's individual will to serving the interest or purpose of the universal Will under Whose direction the entire cosmos moves and derives its existence and purpose. Opposed as this may seem to the modern idea of scientific thinking, this can be demonstrated to be a completely scientific and rational conception from all points of view. This provides a rational alternative although revolutionary way of thinking that can be justified only after careful study and application of the Bhakti Vedanta philosophy.

[1] <http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/chopra/article/Can-We-Evolve-Beyond-Evolution-We-Have-To-10818947.php>