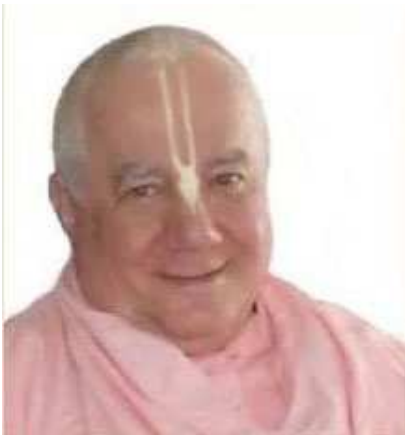


A DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF PHENOMENOLOGY

by

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The nature of the philosophical description of consciousness requires a mode of reflection that is different from ordinary understanding, including most of what transpires in

the name of philosophy. Therefore, it will be helpful to review once again the basic development that has been covered thus far in previous articles.

The experience of consciousness begins with sense-certainty, in which truth or being is considered to be given immediately in the particular external sensuous object. When the object is considered in relation to consciousness, however, it is the consciousness of the object that becomes the essential, so that what is in the universal substance of consciousness is considered the actual truth or being of the object, rather than the individual object in or by itself. This elevation or mediation is called perception or perceptual consciousness.

Thus, while the object is maintained as object of consciousness, its essential truth is the universal. But the form of consciousness in which the essence (truth) of an object is a universal, is that of an object perceived in the form of its properties (which are universals), i.e., as an object that manifests itself in its properties.

The word “properties” implies that they are the properties of something, so that the object is implicitly preserved even when we refer only to its properties. Since “properties” is plural or manifold, and many-ness implies difference, the properties are therefore determinate. As determinate the properties negate or exclude each other; each is therefore a One. Likewise, the properties as One’s also exclude that of which they are the properties, while the object as a One similarly distinguishes itself from its properties. An object that is a One with properties is called a Thing.

The particular object, apprehended as a One, is nonetheless essentially universal for perceptual consciousness, as previously explained. In spite of this, consciousness still takes the object to be the essential truth and, in order to preserve that truth, considers its apprehension (the *consciousness* of the object) to be false or unessential.

But perceptual consciousness knows only the various properties,

and not the object itself. The properties, as various or different from one another, are themselves sensuous universals, i.e. have being or truth in themselves. Therefore consciousness now takes what is object to it (the sensuous universals) as having sensuous being and thereby ceases to be perception and is led back to sense-certainty. This, however, is sense-certainty that is *arrived* at, unlike the immediacy of sense-certainty in the beginning. It is a *return* to sense-certainty, and as such an intermediate state is implied. A *return* to sense-certainty means that the object that is apprehended necessarily includes this intermediate state, thus the Truth of the object in its immediacy is now altered by this implicit intermediate. This intermediate is consciousness’ knowledge of its own responsibility for what it is perceiving as an object. This will ultimately lead to the understanding of the object in its purity.

Consciousness oscillates between considering the Oneness of the Thing as due to itself with the Many-ness of the properties attributed to the object, or the Many-ness of the properties as due to itself and the Oneness arising from the object. The Thing is then considered as having two distinct aspects: (1) the way the thing exhibits or manifests itself *to consciousness*, (2) the way the thing is *in itself*—reflected into itself, opposite of the way it presents itself to consciousness. Thus there appears to be two things:

- (1) the object in and for itself—having its own existence
- (2) the object as it is for consciousness

What is *for itself* implies that it is *not* for another. What is *for* another implies *not* being for itself. But how can one object have these two contradictory aspects?

To be for itself implies relation, and relation implies mediation or negation. Thus for itself is the negation of itself as immediacy or the supersession of its immediacy. To be for another likewise implies the supersession of the immediacy of a thing. Therefore for-itself is essentially the same as for-another—the two can coexist without contradiction since they are identical in essence, i.e., they are essentially a (synthetic) unity. In this way the Thing in-itself and for-itself, as having its own being, is overcome just as the immediacy of being in sense-certainty was previously overcome.

The immediacy of being in sense-certainty was overcome by universality (perception), yet this universality was afflicted by sensuousness, viz. the object was still there as *object* while its being or truth was taken up (superseded) by consciousness. Likewise the Thing is simultaneously a One (particular) as well as a manifold of properties or “free matters” (universal)—thus it

is a distinct, specific Thing and is also that which is determined only in relation to other Things.

All of these considerations when taken together express the full essential nature of the Thing (universal), yet the Thing in itself still remains as an existence for another (particular). It is only when the being-for-itself of the Thing is understood as identical to its being-for-another that the sensuous otherness is overcome and one reaches the original synthetic unity of the Concept (*G. Begriff*) which contains all the different yet inseparable moments of essentiality, unessentiality, particularity, universality, distinction and relatedness. In other words, the Thing is simply the nature of the Understanding which constitutes it, and in which all the conflicting moments are unified. This is the Unconditioned, because the Thing as a sensuous other, or thing-in-itself, is overcome by the recognition of the identity of being-for-itself and for-another, i.e. both are the same mediated immediacies.

Common sense or consciousness as perception thinks it is dealing with substantial things which have their own being, when in fact thought or the activity of consciousness is at work and present in each and every moment. Without recognizing this presence of thought in its experiences, consciousness becomes dominated by that which is abstracted from itself, as having a being on its own, and does not realize that the things which appear to be outside and beyond itself are its own essence, intimately integrated with it. It is in this way that perceptual consciousness fails to arrive at the Truth of Things (since it does not acknowledge the constitutive role of consciousness) and is rather left to reveal its own untruth (since it thereby deals only with abstractions). This may also be considered a reference to Kant's philosophy that Hegel criticized as being only at the level of perceptual

consciousness.

The consciousness of Understanding deals with the aspects or the "in-so-far-as" perspective of things. It does not deal with



G. W. F. Hegel

things in their contradictory wholeness. Rational consciousness, however, deals with wholes that are only abstractly divided for the sake of Understanding. It is the task of Reason to determine how to deal with wholes as wholes. Most importantly, is that comprehension of the whole, even when that is attained, puts the comprehending consciousness outside the whole that it is comprehending. This is therefore *not* the whole as it is in and for itself. The whole must include the

consciousness comprehending it as well as everything else, and it must have its own being beyond any finite conception of it, and in fact produce the finite conception of itself. It is perhaps one of the most significant achievements of Hegelian philosophy to be able to reach this goal—Truth in and for itself and not only for consciousness. Another is that Hegel is able to expound a scientific system that deals with a substantial Reality that is essentially Subject, i.e. a Truth that is rationally conscious of itself—God. And finally within his system he is able to deal with all the problems of philosophy in a consistently methodical way that proves to be both necessary and complete. All of this is the product and development of Reason which is the integrating and differentiating substance of Reality that is essentially Subject—viz., the Absolute Reason of God.

Subjective Evolution of Consciousness



Evolution is generally thought of as something merely objective. But objective evolution is a misperception of reality. Evolution is actually based on consciousness, which is subjective. Subjective evolution, however, seems to be objective evolution to those who are ignorant of this perspective.

Consciousness seems to be the unessential embedded in a concrete substance, but actually it is just the opposite. Consciousness is the substantial and its objective content or world is floating on it connected by a shadowy medium like mind. This view finds surprising support in advanced modern science from which physicists like Paul Davies have concluded that it is necessary to adopt "a new way of thinking that is in closer accord with mysticism than materialism."

The dynamic supersubjective living reality that produces as much as is produced by its constituent subjective and objective fragmental parts or moments is in and for itself the embodiment of ecstasy, i.e. forever beyond the static reification of materialistic misunderstanding. With an irresistible passion for truth, Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaja, the author of *Subjective Evolution of Consciousness* takes us to an incomparable synthesis of thought from Descartes, Berkeley and Hegel in the West to Buddha, Shankara, and Sri Chaitanya in the East to reveal the ultimate conception of reality in all its comprehensive beauty and fulfillment.

**To obtain the book *Subjective Evolution of Consciousness* please contact us at:
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