

production of the polypeptides. In volcanoes the temperature of molten lava is about 1,200° C, which will completely destroy the amino acids. It should also be mentioned that ultraviolet radiation, being a very powerful source of energy, can not only create organic molecules but also destroy them – especially macromolecules such as proteins and nucleotides.

Finally, from a purely chemical point of view, Fox's proteinoids may be expected to possess some catalytic activity as general acid base catalysts according to a catalysis law of the Bronsted type. This has nothing to do with the true nature of a living cell and, therefore, with life. One can see that all these claims amount to no more than *molecular stories*. They are like taking a rope to be a serpent. Thus, from the above evidence, we can see that assumptions (2) and (3) have no valid scientific foundation.

Leslie Orgel, in a 1998 review article entitled, "The Origin of Life—a review of facts and speculations" has summarized our current state of affairs in regard to life and its origin as – "There are several tenable theories about the origin of organic material on the primitive earth, but in no case is the supporting evidence compelling. Similarly, several alternative scenarios might account

for the self-organization of a self-replicating entity from pre-biotic organic material, but all of those that are well formulated are based on hypothetical chemical synthesis that are problematic." [9]

Hence, sadly, none of the stories when rigorously scrutinized explain the observable characteristics of life. Life is, therefore, beyond molecular concepts.

#### References:

1. Oparin, A.I. *The Chemical Origin of Life*, Trans. A. Sygne. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1964.
2. Dose, K., Fox, S.W., Deborin, G.A., and Pavlovskaya, T.E., eds. *The Origin of Life and Evolutionary Biochemistry*. New York and London: Plenum Press, 1974, p. 119.
3. Oparin, A.I. *The Chemical Origin of Life*, p. 46.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
5. Fox, S.W. *et al.*, *Chem. Eng. News*, 48, 80 (June 22, 1970).
6. Fox, S.W. *Chem. Eng. News*, 49 (No. 50), 48 (1971).
7. Orgel, L.E. and Miller, S.L. *The Origins of Life on the Earth*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974, p. 144.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
9. Orgel, L.E., "The origin of life – a review of facts and speculations." *Trends in Biochemical Sciences*, 1998, Vol. 23, pp. 491-495.

## PERSONALITY IS THE ROOT OF ALL SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

by

Sripad Bhakti Madhava Puri Maharaja, Ph.D.



"The great thing however is, in the show of the temporal and the transient to recognize the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present. For the work of Reason (which is synonymous with the Idea) when considered in its own actuality, is to simultaneously enter external existence and emerge with an infinite wealth of forms, phenomena and phases – a multiplicity that envelops its essential rational kernel with a motley outer rind with which our ordinary consciousness is earliest at home. It is this rind that the Concept must penetrate before Reason can find its own inward pulse and feel it still beating even in the outward phases. But this infinite variety of circumstances which is formed in this element of externality by the light of the rational essence shining in it – all this infinite material, with its regulatory laws – is not the object of philosophy....To comprehend what is, is the task of philosophy: and what is is Reason." [1]

It is best to study Hegel as he presents himself in the context of his own writings. In this way we allow Hegel to teach us what the Science of Philosophy is, and how, through such Science, the Absolute Truth reveals or rationally unfolds itself, although this may challenge, in a radical and transformative way, the accepted ideas and methods we may currently have of philosophy and science. By taking the approach of simply following Hegel's thought in its own development, we discover in the process that we have actually re-invented Philosophy and Science in a such a totally comprehensive and systematic way that we are finally able to integrate Mind and Matter into an Absolute Whole that tran-

sends and encompasses both while yet maintaining a clear differentiation and distinction between them – a genuine unity in diversity that has been the cynosure of philosophical inquiry from time immemorial.

The task is to scientifically comprehend the ability of Reason to simultaneously hold contradictory sides, such as identity and difference or unity and diversity, within a higher unity, the Absolute or Spirit, without reductionistically collapsing their difference. The explicit process involves three stages [2]: (1) the abstract understanding of the separated sides of the contradiction, (2) the dialectical relation of the sides, which dissolves their abstract independent separate existence (negative reason), and (3) the raising of this dialectical relationship into a dynamic unity – a process Hegel calls *aufheben* or sublimation, and in his later writings – positive reason. The ability to rationally think through this process provides us with an insight into the essence of the Concept (*Begriff*), whose intrinsic dynamic is constituted by the dialectical and sublimational activity that is self-evoked by the very nature of the various aspects or moments of the Concept itself. To understand this requires a rigorously scientific or systematic treatment and sound philosophical grounding in order to follow the dialectical and sublimational movement consistently throughout the whole development of the Phenomenology, Logic, Nature and Spirit until the entire scope of Reality is taken up into a rational, systematic Whole – the Absolute Idea or Divine Personality.

The Absolute Idea in (or by) itself and for itself, freely releases itself in its totality as external to or outside of itself as Nature. This is not a logical transition but a free creation – what we may call

another perspective that is external to and thereby related to the Absolute in this externality. In the external Idea as Nature not only the Idea but each of its moments also exists outside of each other. This element of externality as an actuality or reality is space, and in its ideality is time. Each moment of this externality is a moment of the Idea in itself or implicit Idea. As such the moments appear as inherently spatial, and the being for other, difference or relation of the moments to each other again appears as spatial or outside one another. Being mutually bounded in this way constitutes the sphere of finitude. This objective or real externality as space also has its inseparable subjective or ideal externality as time. In this sense bodies do not exist in space and time but as spatial and temporal by their very nature.

Therefore Hegel's concept of Nature cannot be considered pantheistic. Hegel considers the Absolute Idea in its "otherness" to be Nature. [3] A clear distinction exists between the Absolute Idea in and for itself, which Hegel describes as "God before the creation of the world and finite spirit," [4] and the external Idea in itself as Nature. This latter is the sphere of finitude as explained above. But the Idea in itself has to become for itself and thus breaks through the bond of Nature to rise to the sphere of Spirit, which characterizes the return to the Idea that is for itself out of its immersion in external otherness. For Hegel, Nature and Spirit make up what is called the *realphilosophie*. The final stages of the development in *realphilosophie* end in Art, Philosophy and Religion that closes the circle, so that finite spirit returns to the Absolute Idea in and for itself or God. Finding itself at home with itself in its self-determination or Freedom is more or less the point at which Hegel's philosophy ends. The life of the liberated spirit within the Absolute is not discussed or known by him. For this we must go to the *vaisnava* literature on *rasa* and *lila* that takes one beyond liberation or freedom to the platform of Divine Love. Why is personality ultimately involved here? One may gain an intuitive grasp of this simply by becoming conscious of the fact that everyone – scientist, philosopher, etc. – is fundamentally a thinking being – a specific personality. Whatever conceptions one may have of their own origins – be it from atoms, molecules, angels, space-time warps, strings, one celled organisms, etc. – the fundamental fact remains that there is a thinking being at the foundation of all such conceptions. The idea that the world consists of atoms, molecules, etc. is ultimately conceived of and developed by scientific or philosophic personalities. Thus they are originally concepts. Later we may come to learn about these concepts and theories as if they are the given facts of nature, and accept them in that way. But the truth is that they are preceded by a lengthy historical development of thought before they are ever assumed as given facts of nature and, most importantly, they all have their ultimate origination in a thinking being – or personality, which much exist *pari passu* along with any and all kinds of experience. Then what comes first? Is it the thinking persons or the atoms that such persons think they are originated from? It is in scientifically comprehending the answer to this question that the whole of Hegelian philosophy has to be understood.

Although it seems to have been well-known shortly after Hegel's death (see for example Cunningham's "Thought and Reality" [5] or Caird's "Hegel" [6]), for scholars of our own time, with a few exceptions, it has not been widely recognized that Hegel's philosophy is the essential affirmation of the personal nature of the

Absolute Truth, although he clearly affirms this throughout his writings. [7] I think there are a few major reasons for this.

(1) Hegel, himself, directly explains that his purpose is to present philosophy in a strictly scientific form, and that this must be done in terms of concepts. Thus 'Subject' is preferred to 'God' which is more a name of the Absolute than a concept. [8] Personality is such a concrete concept that it is really only to be invoked at the conclusion of Science, for, as we have indicated, it is also where the whole of Science comes from – therefore it is both the origin and conclusion. Consequently Hegel claims that genuine philosophy is a circle of circles.



**Hegel**

(2) Another reason is that in our modern age there is a persistent prejudice toward impersonalism when it comes to understanding truth that is objective to us, i.e. the prejudice that the Absolute must be Substance rather than Subject. If Spinoza shocked the age in which he proclaimed that the Absolute was Substance, it has now become common place in our time, and it is Hegel who now shocks the world with the scientific conclusion that the Absolute is Subject [9] and Personality.

Even when we hear the word "subject" we are unwilling to think in terms of personality and would rather think of it in some abstract way. This is correct as far as abstract Science is concerned with concepts, but we must understand that there is also a Reality or Actuality involved. There is certainly a logical difference in meaning between Subject and Personality in keeping with these terms as Hegel develops them, but just as Subject does not exclude its Substantial Reality, so too does the concept of Personality necessarily, and perhaps in a way more easily conceived, include its reality. Thus, for example, we call a person 'brave' only if they have manifested an act of, say, saving someone's life, so that personality is not only something subjective but is integrally connected with its manifestation or actuality. In this way it is only with the inclusion of Actuality and Ideality in the wholesome consideration of the Absolute in its Spiritual Reality that leads us to the comprehension of Truth as Divine Personality or God.

(3) We have not known or been taught how to scientifically deal with a Reality that is personal. Modern science, especially, has been developed only in terms of a merely physical nature, the attempt having been made to reduce even life to purely chemical and molecular factors via objective evolutionary theories. Everything from the origin of the universe to the origin of human society has been based on such evolutionary thinking from some primitive state or substance to the presently observed world. Recent scientific revolutions of the twentieth century, however, have called all of that into question. The organismic conception of life turns the table around and has the organism as a whole determining the parts, and this is becoming the ruling paradigm in the physics of field theory and quantum theory as much as biology and certainly ecology.

(4) The Judeo-Christian heritage from which modern science arose

in the West seems to put the Personal feature of the Absolute Truth outside the system of Nature and the world in general. This may certainly be correct as regards material nature but the situation is more complex than that. In order to fully comprehend the relation between God and World requires a careful understanding of the Concept in its integral and differential moments, where distinct difference and unity both play a role. This is the domain of scientific philosophy as Hegel developed it. The principle of identity in difference or identity of identity and difference that forms the basis of rational thought, distinct from abstract understanding, requires a comprehension of God as both transcendent and immanent with respect to His creation and creatures.

Thus, for instance, Hegel shows that Thought as Absolute Objectivity in and for itself, overarches subjective thought and its opposing objective matter, and are dialectically connected in a process of dynamically canceling and producing one another. It is this dialectical movement of thought at the subjective-objective oppositional level of reality that, when conceived as a unitary organic whole, rises to the level of an overarching Concept that is intimately and dynamically tied up with its various moments or parts yet distinct from them. This same organic structure, according to its content, is found throughout the whole of Reality, be it God, Idea, Concept, or the relation of Spirit to Logic and Nature.

(5) The idea of a majestic unity overarching a servile multiplicity brings the fear of a bygone era of authoritarian hierarchies, a concept that springs from an abstract, static understanding of unity as opposed to multiplicity. The rational principle of the identity of unity and multiplicity dispels that fear as irrational for a society that has risen to the platform of Science. As Hegel writes, "...in the Idea infinity is genuine; individuality as such is

nothing and simply one with absolute ethical majesty – for which genuine, living, non-servile oneness is the only true ethical life of the individual.”[10] Here “individuality as such” means individuality conceived as an independently subsisting unit held in abstract opposition to the universal. It is this abstraction of individuality that is dissolved or nothing, whereas genuine individuality has a “true ethical life”. Without comprehending the principle of identity in difference through which Hegel devel-

ops his philosophy, it is very easy to mistaken certain excerpts from his writings as abstract monism.

When we think in this way it seems rationally unavoidable that personality must be the conclusion of any science or philosophy because, as we have mentioned above, the rational thinking of a person is already involved at the root of all science and philosophy. To ignore thinking being that originates science is to fail to comprehend what the original object of scientific philosophical endeavor was in the first place – to understand the origin of one’s self. This insight proves to be of essential importance in grasping the standpoint from which Hegel’s system is developed. In other words, the knower is the essential unity of knowledge and the known. In this sense it is similar to the Kantian unity of apperception of the “I” but Hegel presents it in a more consistent and scientifically developed form.

If we try to comprehend Hegel without taking this basic perspective into consideration we will have missed the most important contribution of his whole philosophy to the modern world. For it is a perspective that does not ask us to abandon any of the great achievements of science that we have already gained, but to expand upon them and integrate them in dimensions that a merely substantial or physically based science could never comprehend.

#### References:

1. Hegel, G.W.F., Rosenkranz, K. and Hotho, H.G., *Georg. Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Werke*, (German Edition), Nabu Press, vii, 17.1
2. Hegel, G.W.F., *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830), translated by Wallace, W. Oxford University Press, §79, p. 113 (1982).
3. *Ibid.* §18, p. 23.
4. Hegel, G.W.F., *Hegel's Science of Logic*, translated by Miller, A.V. Humanities Press Intl., p. 50 (1990)
5. Cunningham, G.W. *Thought and Reality In Hegel's System*, Batoche Books Limited (2001); also online at <http://www.gwfhegel.org/Books/TR1.html>
6. Caird, E., Hegel, G.W.F., Blackwood, W. & Sons (1883); also online at <http://www.gwfhegel.org/Books/CAIRD.html>
7. Hegel, G.W.F., *Hegel's Science of Logic*, translated by Miller, A.V., Humanities Press Intl., p. 824 (1990) “The absolute Idea, as the rational Concept that in its reality meets only with itself, is by virtue of this immediacy of its objective identity, on the one hand the return to life; but it has no less sublated this form of its immediacy, and contains within itself the highest degree of opposition. The Concept is not merely soul but free subjective Concept that is for itself and therefore possesses personality – the practical, objective Concept determined in and for itself which, as person, is impenetrable atomic individuality, but explicitly universality and cognition, and in its other has its own objectivity for its object. All else is error, confusion, opinion, endeavor, caprice and transitoriness; the absolute Idea alone is being, imperishable life, self-knowing truth, and is all truth. It is the sole subject matter and content of Philosophy.”
8. Hegel, G.W.F., *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Translated by Miller, A.V., Oxford University Press, § 23, p. 12 (1977)
9. *Ibid.* § 17, p. 10.
10. Hegel, G.W.F. *Natural Law*, translated by Knox, T.M. p.67 (1975)



“Not once in the dim past,  
but continuously  
by conscious mind  
is the miracle of the  
Creation wrought.”

—Arthur Eddington

Sir Arthur Eddington, Scientist-Philosopher