

One of the many changes arising from the advent of the Industrial Age is a perceived dichotomy between the spiritual and the scientific. As technological advancement has increased, science has positioned itself as independent of religion, with many scientists proclaiming that faith is insufficient as a medium for explaining the world around us. Many great scientists expounded this view, including Galileo, Kepler, and other Europeans of the Renaissance era, portraying science as a completely secular field. For their part, the prevailing religious authorities did little to assuage this assumption, discrediting the achievements of these pioneers in science, and in effect, entrenching this bifurcation between science and religion. However, a close examination of the ancient Indian ideals of Sanatana Dharma reveals that this assumption is indeed, incorrect. Sanatana Dharma and Science are each verifiable truths in their own right.

In order to come to a complete understanding of the issue at hand, one must explore the etymology of Sanatana Dharma. The word dharma is derived from the Sanskrit root word “*dhr*” which means, “to support.” Therefore in its purest essence, the concept of dharma can be explained as that which supports the underlying order. A simple example of this would be to ask about the dharma of sugar. The quick answer to this would be that the dharma of sugar is to be sweet; accordingly, the dharma of salt is to be salty. Understanding it thus, we can apply this concept to many other objects; for instance, the dharma of an electron would be to emit a negative charge. If it did not do so, the space-time continuum as we know it would cease to exist. In the same way, if salt tasted sweet, there would be no way to season our food. Thus, an object’s dharma is what supports the underlying order.

Yet, how does this complex, seemingly abstract concept fall into line with the objective, logical processes of science? Notice that the dharma of sugar to be sweet, and that of the electron to be negative, are labeled by science, not as dharma, but as properties. It is the study of these very same properties of objects that we call the natural sciences. Now, the relationship between these two fields becomes very clear. The study of the dharma of inanimate objects is called physics. The study of the dharma of living organisms and their cells is called biology. Moving up the ladder, the study of the dharma of individual human beings is labeled by science as psychology, and that of the human collective is known as sociology. The collections of these various “-ologies” is known as science, and the collection of these dharmas is called Sanatana Dharma, the Sanskrit meaning of Sanatana meaning universal. Thus we must come to the understanding that Sanatana Dharma and Science are simply two ways of describing the same things.

Yet, one of the fundamental exclusivities that prevent the complete interweaving of Sanatana Dharma and Science is the acknowledgement of a supreme being in the former. The logical, rule bound universe of science has no explanation for the presence of a God, on the other hand, the existence of Bhagvan is a fundamental axiom of Sanatana Dharma. The key to reconciling this seemingly divisive idea can be found in the Bhagavad Gita, one of the central dogmas of Sanatana Dharma. If we look to verses 4 and 5 of Chapter 7 of the Gita, Lord Krishna, speaking as the voice of the Supreme Lord specifically declares that he has two *prakritis*, or natures. His lower nature is described as matter bound, and composed of various elements. The study of this matter *prakriti* is what we call science; indeed science is simply the study of what humans observe around them using their senses. This lower *prakriti* is the part of Bhagvan that can be

comprehended by the senses. The higher *prakriti* is then described by Shri Krishna as the principle of life, or consciousness, present in all living beings. It is this principle that separates a living body from a dead one, while from the outside, the mass, dimensions, and density of a dead man may seem no different from those when he was living, the absence of the life principle is the difference. This life principle is not directly observable by the five senses, but must be there, else thinking and breathing would be impossible. In fact, science does provide an explanation for this higher *prakriti*, Richard L. Amoroso, director of the Noetic Advanced Studies Institute, proposed a theory of Noetics which centers on the idea that there exists an additional causal principle of purposefulness not found in matter but in consciousness. Amoroso theorizes that this principle of life exists in a Bose or photon particulate phenomenon, and thus is rendered invisible to the human senses. Thus, by reconciling the two *prakritis* of Bhagvan with the ideas of science, one can solve one of the biggest differences between Sanatana Dharma and science.

Scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the inventor of the atom bomb, seems to understand the linkages between the two fields of Science and Sanatana Dharma when he, in the description of the magnitude of his invention, quoted the Bhagavad Gita, proclaiming, "Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." Oppenheimer's words, examination and inductive reasoning show that both Sanatana Dharma and Science are both verifiable truths. These two concepts are thus not mutually exclusive. A Honda Accord and a Toyota Corolla travel the same road, but one is not inherently more "valid" of a car than the other. In the same way, Sanatana Dharma and Science are two equally valid ways of describing the same things.

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Dated: 3:32 PM 7/31/2011