

International Seminar on "Science, Vedanta and Foundations of Physics"
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth
July 6 & 7, 2011

Consciousness in Vedanta: Foundationalist Perspective

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Foundations of philosophy and physics have been transformed from myth to foundationalism and from both 'uncertainty' on the one hand and from anti-foundationalism to foundationalism and from both to spiritualism on the other.

- **Myth:** A community-forming narrative on "big questions": origin of the universe, human beings, their good, etc. It involves a calendar of celebrations (cycles in nature & in the community). It requires messianic tradition and priesthood to regulate social relationships.
- **Foundationalism** (archaeology): Rational enquiry into the basic beliefs on "big questions" and reframing them into ontology/ metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, science, economics, etc.
- **Philosophy:** A systematic inquiry, by way of *logos*, *dialogos*, dialectic from what is better known to what is less known on "big questions", and then from general principles to particular conclusions.
- **Natural Science:** A systematic experimental/ observational inquiry into hypothesis, principles, laws and operations of nature. It involves a 'temperament'.
- **Uncertainty:** Implies wave/ particle duality.

"All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force... We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent Mind. This Mind is the matrix of all matter." [Max Planck](#)

"Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature. And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are a part of the mystery that we are trying to solve." [Max Planck](#)

In 1925, [before] his revolutionary theory was complete, Erwin Schrodinger wrote: "This life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of this entire existence, but in a certain sense the ``whole"; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance. This, as we know, is what the Brahmins express in that sacred, mystic formula which is yet really so simple and so clear: [*tat*

tvam asi], this is you. Or, again, in such words as "I am in the east and the west, I am above and below, [I am this entire world.]"

According to his biographer Walter Moore, there is a clear continuity between Schrodinger's understanding of Vedanta and his research, "The unity and continuity of Vedanta are reflected in the unity and continuity of wave mechanics. In 1925, the worldview of physics was a model of a great machine composed of separable interacting material particles. During the next few years, Schrodinger and Heisenberg and their followers created a universe based on superimposed inseparable waves of probability amplitudes. This new view would be entirely consistent with the Vedantic concept of All in One.

Anti- Foundationalism:

NāsadiyaSukta of Rg Veda, 10th *Mandala*, *Risi* Dirghatamas says "At first was neither Being nor Nonbeing. There was not air nor yet sky beyond. What was its wrapping? Where? In whose protection? Was water there, unfathomable and deep? There was no death then, nor yet deathlessness; of night or day there was not any sign. Who really knows? Who can presume to tell it? Whence was it born? Whence issued this creation? Even the gods came after this emergence. Then who can tell from whence it came to be? That out of which creation has arisen, whether it held it firm or it did not, He who surveys it in the highest heaven, He surely knows - or maybe He does not know!" **All from unmanifest to the manifest.** At the beginning of a cycle, *Akāsha* is motionless, unmanifested. Then *Prāna* begins to act, more and more, creating grosser and grosser forms out of *Akāsha*--plants, animals, men, stars, and so on. After an incalculable time this evolution ceases and involution begins, everything being resolved back through finer and finer forms into the original *Akāsha* and *Prāna*, when a new cycle follows. Now there is something beyond *Akāsha* and *Prāna*. Both can be resolved into a third thing called *Mahat*--the Cosmic Mind. This Cosmic Mind does not create *Akāsha* and *Prāna*, but changes itself into them.

The theory of *adhyāsa* begins with day-to-day life and experience, a kind of *naiveté* of outlooks containing certain elements of truths and untruths. This is a kind of power of discrimination. Every proposition contains truth content and falsity content. So it is natural for every seeker of truth to undertake the work with critical evaluation. When he finds the view contains more untruths than truth, he rejects it and accepts another view, which has a greater degree of truth than the previous one. This rejection is known as *apavāda*, which literally means discordant view and that it does not accord with the reality any more. *Advaita Vedānta* maintains that there are views, which accord with the reality more adequately than others. Śankara, for example, prefers, *Sāṅkhya* to *Vaisesika* and some of his later followers prefer *Saktism* to *Saivism*

There is four –fold logical implication of the *sukta*- the first sign of Knowledge, not Myth, centered civilization:

1. There is Being.
2. There is Non- Being.

3. There is both Being and Non- Being.
4. There is neither Being nor Non- Being.

The Buddhist logician Nagarjuna has developed *pramanachatustaya* on the basis of the *sukta* to vindicate the notion of *shunya* or void.

- The basic presupposition- *Mahat, Prāna* and *Akāsh*
- From unmanifest to the manifest
- Consciousness- Ontological, Metaphysical, Epistemological, Psychological, Moral and Yoga.
- Degrees of Reality – *Pārmārthika, Vyāvahārika* and *Prātibhāsika*
- Hermeneutics- Self is within, self is without; self is before, self is behind; self is on the right; self is on the left; self is above and self is below.
- Distinction between *parā vidyā* and *aparā vidyā*
- "*Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithyā Jivo Brahmaiva Na Aparah*" (*Brahman* the Absolute alone is real; this world is unreal; and the *Jiva* or the individual soul is non-different from *Brahman*).

According to Dr. C. P. Girija Vallabhan, in autumn of 1925 Schrodinger wrote: "Vedanta teaches that consciousness is singular, all happenings are played out in one universal consciousness and there is no multiplicity of selves."

Schrodinger fully acknowledges Sankara's view that Brahman is associated with a certain power called Maya to which belongs the appearance of the entire world. ... Schrodinger did not believe that it will be possible to demonstrate the unity of consciousness by logical arguments. One must make imaginative leap guided by communion with nature and the persuasion of analogies.

- There are discrepancies and contestations on the philosophical implications of quantum mechanics.
- Schrodinger along with many others are of the view that the new physics comprising of relativity theory and quantum mechanics is conducive to spiritualism of Vedanta.