

Matter, Mind and Consciousness: Recent Trends in Philosophy and Science¹

–Swami Atmapriyananda

Vice- Chancellor, RKM- Vivekananda
University, Kolkata

ॐ सह नावतु | सह नौ भुनक्तु | सहवीर्यं करवावहे |

तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु | मा विद्विषावहे ||

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ||²

May the Supreme Being protect us both, the teacher and the disciple by revealing the true nature of knowledge. May the Supreme Being protect us both the teacher and the disciple by revealing the true nature of application of knowledge. May we both settle together for the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. May the knowledge and wisdom acquired be effective and illuminating. May there be no disharmony between us. Om Peace, peace, peace.

Every discipline of knowledge has its own jurisdiction. Knowledge has been called in the ancient wisdom *pramāṇa*. This *pramāṇa* is often referred to as the valid source of knowledge. When we talk about the valid source of knowledge, we have to define the jurisdiction within which the knowledge remains operative. For example, if we need something in the

¹ Transcribed from the Keynote Speech at the National Symposium at Kaivalyadhama, 28 November, 2014. by Rajeshwar Mukherjee

² *Kāthopaniṣad*, Peace Invocation.

world of physical science, we do not go to a documented book on biology to be able to find it out; or if we want to find out anything a problem with our eyes we need not consult a book on physics, but consult a book on medical science particularly dealing with the eyes. If you ask science about consciousness, about *samādhi*, science will blink and say, ‘Sir, this is not my jurisdiction.’ Not that science falls short of explaining these things, but science just does not have the capacity to be able to do it, because it is confined to a kind of jurisdiction. What is the jurisdiction of science? It is matter. I mean the physical science. Now the word ‘science’ is used everywhere. In the older times the word ‘Vedānta’ was very famous. It would be very prestigious, if you would say that it is found in the books on Vedānta. In the modern world, in the modern age of wisdom, the word ‘science’ has become highly prestigious. If you want to give a prestigious tag to any discipline of science, you add the word ‘science’. Therefore, those who operate in the field of humanities and arts, always feel, ‘Oh, we are not scientific’. So what they did was in studying politics, they called it political science; in studying sociology, called it social science; in studying economics, called it economic science. So just to add prestige to it we call science. Similarly we call the spirituality a spiritual science. Who are the Ṛṣis? The great men who discovered the truths of religion and spirituality, they are the spiritual scientists. It is just to show that the people who are meditating and doing things, which are not suppose be done, are doing things which are very useful and very scientific. This is an unfortunate apology that we always associate with disciplines which are not, per se, called Science. But each discipline has

its own value, own prestige, its own authority, its own depth of knowledge and its own applications. So we need not be apologetic about it at all. Science need not be apologetic about anything when it says that I do not know anything about God; because science does not suppose to know anything about God. It is not its jurisdiction. If you want to know about God and spirituality, you need not get to a book on physical sciences. You have to go to a book which reveals spirituality. Therefore, let us keep these two things as disciplines having two different jurisdictions, having their own authority. So we need not try to mix them up as the attempt people do justifying the discipline like religion and spirituality through science or trying to bring science needlessly into spirituality. Where knowledge ends, we say, the wisdom begins. Therefore, beginning of wisdom is the end of knowledge. Human being needs all of them.

With this basic understanding we enter into the discussion about the reality of matter, mind, and consciousness. Suppose you say that I am the Consciousness, the supreme spirit. I am not the body, not the mind, not the intellect. The famous hymn reads:

मनोबुद्धयहंकार चित्तानि नाहं, न च श्रोत्रजिह्वे न च घ्राणनेत्रे ।

न च व्योम भूमिर्न तेजो न वायुः, चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् ॥ ³

I am not the body, I am not the mind stuff, I am not the ears, tongue, nose, and eyes. I am not the space, earth, fire, and air. I am the Śiva, the auspicious, of the nature of Consciousness which is Bliss.

³ Saṃkara, *Nirvāṇa-śatakam*, 1.

The moment the chant is over perhaps we feel a peculiar sensation in our stomach: 'oh it's the lunch time'. We deny the *prāṇa*, we deny that you are the body. But when the will goes for the food, off course, we find that we are the *prāṇa*, we are the body.

So, you are the body in a sense, you are the mind, you are the intellect, you are everything, but at the same time you are none of these. So when the idea of denying the body- the mind and matter- comes, we should remember that we are not denying the body; but we are saying that our dimension which actually transcends the body and mind is what is meant. In the ancient wisdom, the *Vedas* for example and the *Upaniṣads* following them, they are absolutely clear about this. Later on when these sacred texts came to be interpreted and commented upon by the great Acāryas like the Sāyanācārya, who wrote the commentary of the entire body of the *Vedas*, Śaṃkarācārya, the great Advaitic prophet, who wrote extraordinary commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Brahmasūtra*, followed by the Rāmānujācārya, the Viśiṣṭa-advaita philosopher, followed by Madhva and the innumerable schools of Vedānta. The problem is of interpretation. The text is itself very clear, but when you interpret them, squeeze them in the light of system which you want to establish then there is a problem. The pundits and the scholars will not be satisfied unless you make simple things very complicated. There is an interesting incident in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's life. Śrī Caitanya is one of the greatest human being in India and he is well known to be a great Bhakti saint. He was an extraordinary Naiyāyika, the great logician. But his extraordinary logic does not come to God, because God cannot be

related through logic. There is an interesting story about his life. He was trying to understand Bhāgavata from a great scholar. The scholars usually are highly interpretative and they know how to make simple things complicated. That is the sign of scholarship. Something which is so simple and transparent is expressed by the scholars in such an idiom that it becomes extremely complex. For example, there was a Christian theologian who wrote one thousand pages on the simplicity of God. Then a pious illiterate Christian lady came and said that if the simplicity of god is so complex what would be about the complexity of God. Now, the scholar, who was teaching Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, was telling him of which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would not try to understand. At the end of the class with a great vexation he said, ‘oh I am unable to teach you. You just do not understand what I say. You are incapable of understanding this.’ Mahāprabhu smiled gently and politely said, ‘I understand the text but I cannot understand your interpretational text’. As for example, the original text in the scriptures, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, talks about the five *ātman*s which were converted to *koṣas* by Śaṅkara to suit his philosophy. The word *pañcakoṣa* neither appeared in the *Upaniṣads* anyway, nor in the Vedas. *Annamaya-koṣa*, *prāṇamaya-koṣa*, *manomaya-koṣa*, *vijñānamaya-koṣa*, *ānandamaya-koṣa* are very commonly being spoken about by the students of Vedānta and Yoga; but interestingly, the word *koṣa* occurs nowhere in the *Upaniṣads*. But Śaṅkara’s genius appears to have slightly taken the idea and hijacked it to suit his philosophy. These great Ācāryas may be considered as the intellectual hijackers. They knew how to take the text and make it suit their philosophy. What does the *Upaniṣad* say? It

talks about the *annamaya-ātmā*, *prāṇamaya-ātmā*, *manomaya-ātmā*, *viññānamaya-ātmā* and *ānandamaya-ātmā*. The word *ātman* is used with respect to each of the layers of the human personality. It is very remarkable because the ancient thinkers knew that each of the dimensions of human being is equally valuable and equally important in their own direction. You cannot neglect the body. There is a remarkable *mantra* in the *Kenopaniṣad*:

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि वाक्प्राणश्चक्षु
श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि ।
सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदं माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्यां मा मा ब्रह्म
निराकरोदनिकारणमस्त्वनिकारणं मेऽस्तु ।
तदात्मनि निरते य उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते
मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ॥
॥ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥⁴

May all my limbs be nourished and be strong. May the speech and the organs of sense all be vitalised. All that exists is Brahman spoken of in the Upaniṣads. May I do not deny Brahman. May Brahman the Supreme Being not deny me. Let there be a relationship of non-denial between Brahman and me. Om peace, peace, peace.

All the *indriyas* should be powerful and vitalized. I should be able to speak well, I should be able to see well, I should be able to eat and digest well. That is very important for Yoga. A yogi who cannot digest well will

⁴ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Peace Invocation.

always be in trouble. That is why *haṭhayoga* came into being later on. What was the importance of the *haṭhayoga*? *haṭhayoga* is only a means to attain the real yoga which is the Realization of the Supreme spirit through the *prakṛti-puruṣa viveka*, the discrimination between the Prakṛti and Puruṣa. What we need is a strong body. We need vitality of the body and the senses and the *prāṇa*. The yogis knew how to vitalise the *prāṇa* through *prāṇāyama* and how to keep the body healthy through *haṭhayogic* exercises. A yogi is a very realistic person. A Vedāntin is also a very realistic person and he projects a world view which treats this world as important as the other worlds. We should not neglect anything. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, for example the *Brahmānandavallī*, speaks about the bliss of Brahman. The text reads:

ॐ ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् । तदेषाऽभ्युक्ता ।

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।⁵

‘*Om, the knower of Brahman attains the Supreme. In reference to that the following is said: The Real, the Conscious and Infinite is Brahman.*’

This Brahman is Truth Knowledge and Infinite. It talks about the highest lobe of Brahman and this Brahman is to be realised as the individual Self, ātman; but it ends by saying very remarkably about what you get out of this. What is the *phala*? What is the fruit of this exercise? It does not say that if you realise this, then you get lost from the world and go to the other world. No, it says that you will get all the good things in the present world. It ends by saying: महान्भवति प्रजया पशुभिर्ब्रह्मवर्चसेन । महान्कीर्त्या ॥⁶

⁵ *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1.

⁶ *Ibid.* 3.6.1.

‘He becomes great by progeny, by cattle and spiritual lusture (of his person). (He becomes) great by fame.’

You become great. You become famous. You will get all the good thing of the world and you get brahmavarcas, the power which comes from the realization of the Vedic wisdom. So all that you need in this life and whatever you need in the other life are all subsumed into the knowledge of Vedic wisdom. It has been mentioned because Yoga and Vedānta, the ancient Vedic wisdom, never said that you have to run away from the world, cut out the world from the senses then jump to the other world beyond that. Therefore, when we talk about matter, mind and consciousness we mean that the matter is confined the self to the *annamaya-ātma*, the first dimension of human personality. The human personality is the five layered personality according to Vedānta. According to the Ancient wisdom the layers of the human personality are the *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijñānamaya*, *ānandamaya*. The *annamaya* is the physical body which is extremely important and vital. You cannot neglect your physical body. It is said:

शरीरम् आद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम्⁷

If your body is not well you cannot practise anything. Śrīnivāsa Rāmānujan, for example, was the great scientific genius. We have lost a mathematical genius because he could not take care of his health and died so young. He was not carefully taught to take care of his health. Therefore, the health is very important. The wellbeing of the physical body is as important as liberation. Swami Vivekananda always emphasized that one

⁷ Popular Proverb

should be physically strong. There is a beautiful statement in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*. It reads: नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो⁸

The Ātman cannot be obtained by a weakling.

The Ātman cannot be realized by the weak. Swami Vivekananda said that this cannot be realized even by those who are physically weak. In the backdrop of this his disciple told him, ‘Sir, how do you say that? Even Śaṅkarācārya was not able to say this.’ How do you say that the Ātman is not revealed to the physically weak person? Swami Vivekananda answered: ‘Let Śaṅkara say whatever he likes, but I say the Ātman cannot be realised by a person who has physical weakness.’ He said that most of the ills of India and the backwardness of our people are because they are physically weak. Physical weakness is something which has to be sacrificed. Swamiji, in fact, thundered:

‘Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gītā. The Gītā teaching is not for the weak people.’⁹

We see that the Bhagavān in *Bhagavadgītā* also asserted:

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्योत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥¹⁰

⁸ *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.4.

⁹ Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 1973, Vol. 3, p 242

¹⁰ *Bhagavadgītā* 2.3.

'O Arjuna, yield not to unmanliness. This does not befit you. O scorcher of foes, shaking off this trivial faint-heartedness stand up.'

That requires a tremendous physical strength along with the mental strength. The physical body, the *annamaya*, is the region of matter. Body is absolutely physical and the physical science absolutely deals with the body which is *annamaya*. Between the physical body and the mind there is a layer called life. There is a great discovery in the ancient times. Unfortunately, in Western thinking life and Consciousness are mythical. Life and consciousness, though they appear to be the same, they are not the same. Ancient Indian wisdom discovered that life and consciousness are not the same thing; but they are two different distinct existences. So the life which they call *prāṇa* is the link between what matter and consciousness. The life force is called the *prāṇa* and the *prāṇamaya* is a vital component of human personality. The *prāṇamaya* is controlled through the *prāṇāyāma*. The *prāṇāyāma* is not only breath. The breath is solely the manifestation of the *prāṇa* in the body. The *prāṇa* is much vaster and much bigger. Later on came the Tantra which has roots in the Yoga. The Tantra glorifies and eulogizes *prāṇa* to such an extent that *prāṇa* itself has become an extraordinary matter of investigation. The *prāṇaśakti*, the vital energy, is extremely important in human personality. The *prāṇāyāma* along with the *annamaya* generates another force which is called the thought. What is thought? It is not well-defined or understood. The behavioral sciences, the micro-biology for example, clearly say that the thought is the product of the chemical reactions occurring in the brain. This thought can be altered by various kinds of drugs and the food which

we take. Patañjali, the author of Yoga sutra, certainly knew this. He says that even the oṣadhi somehow can be stimulated. It is possible to alter the states of consciousness through the intake of certain medicines and drugs food etcetera. That is why in India, particularly in *Bhagavadgītā*, we talk about the *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika* kinds of food. Interestingly, the *Bhagavadgītā* nowhere talks about vegetarianism versus non-vegetarianism. It does not enter into the controversy of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, but really talks about the *rājasika*, *tāmasika* and *sāttvika* kinds of food. Any food - which keeps our mind calm, cools our brain, soothes our nerve and elevates us- is called *sāttvika*. Such a food is characterized by the words *rasyam*, *hṛdyam*, *sthiram* and *snigdham*. But it requires mention here that whichever is *sāttvika* for one may not be *sāttvika* for the others. However, food has a very important bearing on human consciousness. It does not mean that human consciousness is completely controlled by food. It has small role to play. So, the *annamaya* and the *prāṇamaya* have the great influence on the mind which is called the *manomaya*. The behavioral scientists will say that the chemical reaction within the brain ooze out a fluid called the mind. As for example, the theory of heat in the primitive state says that heat is a kind of secretion. As the secretion becomes intense, the temperature goes up. Later on, we have come to know that heat is energy and not a secretion. Similarly thought is a kind of energy. What exactly is the thought? What is mind? These are the questions which are repeatedly asked? In Vedānta and Yoga and later in the Buddhism, the mind has been subjected to tremendous investigation. Who is investigating into the mind? The mind itself is

investigating into the mind. The problem about knowing the mind is that the mind which is investigating as if falls back on itself. The investigator and the investigated amalgamate and therefore the difficulty about the investigating the mind is the coalescence of the subject and the object. It does not happen while investigating into physical object. The physical scientist for example investigates into the nature of matter, the nature of world outside through his mind. The mind is the instrument here. On the other hand for the yogi, the mind is the instrument through which he investigates into the nature of mind itself. This means that the mind has the capacity to divide itself into subject and object. This is very remarkable power of mind, although it has been called matter. This has been investigated once again in our scriptures: A very simple experiment was performed to show that mind is matter to establish the conclusion:

अन्नमयं हि सौम्य मनः...¹¹

The disciple comes asks: ‘how do I know that the mind is actually matter?’ The master instructs him not to eat for ten days. He does not eat and comes back after ten days. He was asked, ‘Can you recite the Vedas?’ He recites somewhat, he fumbles. He was instructed: ‘Eat something and come back.’ Then he is able to recite. Then he was subjected to longer fasting for full months. Can you recite? The answer came, ‘sir I cannot remember anything.’ Then he was instructed to eat slowly then he remembered one by one. The food which affects the *prāṇa* influences the mind. When we eat food it is not the physical body which consumes the food as physical body is dead matter. It is also not the mind that consumes

¹¹ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.6.5.

the physical food. Then who is this which consumes food? We knew long ago that it is the prana which consumes food. When take food we repeat: *prāṇāya svāhā, vyānāya svāhā, apānāya svāhā, samānāya svāhā, udānāya svāhā, brahmaṇe svāhā*. We offer the food to *prāṇa* and the *prāṇa* consumes the food. After having consumed the food it distributes the essence of the food to the body and the mind. So, the mind is nourished by the food taken by *prāṇa*. The mind thinks about the various objects. What does it do? The moment it has a thought, it has a counter thought. *Samkalpa*, to do this, and *vikalpa*, not to do this, is very common to human mind. ‘To be or not to be that is the question’. *Samkalpa* leads to *kāmanā*, desire and *kāmanā* leads to *karma* or action. *Karma* takes to *karmaphala*, fruit of action and *karmaphala* immediately leads to enjoying and non-enjoying and thus the cycle goes on.

The *Bhagavadgītā* advises to renounce the desires born out of *saṃkalpa*. It reads:

सङ्कल्पप्रभवान्कामास्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥¹²

‘Completely renouncing all desires arising from *saṃkalpas* (thoughts of worldly desires) and fully restraining all senses from all sides by the mind (one should attain tranquility through gradual practice).’

Samkalpa and *vikalpa* are the qualities of mind. The mind has a *saṃkalpa* to do something. The *vikalpa* is to do it differently or not to be done. There is always an oscillation between *saṃkalpa* and *vikalpa*. But who finally decides? So we decided that there should be a faculty higher than

¹² *Bhagavadgītā* 6.24.

the mind which instructs the mind to do or not to do. *Buddhi* is a very interesting faculty, the determinative faculty— *niścayātmikā buddhi*. It has been found long ago in Yoga and Vedānta that the *buddhi* has to be fine-tuned, purified, and sharpened. Through a sharp, purified, and intelligent *buddhi* the spiritual reality can be achieved. We are well aware that the reality of Brahman, Ātman, or God cannot be seen by the senses. Then how is it that it is realised?

The seer of *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* writes:

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्र्या बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥¹³

'The Self hidden in all beings does not shine forth; but it is seen by the subtle seers through their one pointed and subtle intellect.'

The Brahman is realized by a sharpened mind which is extremely purified by the people who has developed a habit of looking only into the subtle things. Unfortunately we have habituated ourselves to in only gross. What is the difference between a yogi and an ordinary man? The only difference is, the yogi, worth his name, has framed himself to live in a subtle plane; in a plane which does not belong to a gross world of senses. He has trained himself, relaxes there, and finds a great joy. In extreme case the greatest joy is that he gets his own self. The seer of *Upaniṣad* exclaims:

आत्मक्रीडा आत्मरतिः क्रियावा-
नेष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः ॥¹⁴

¹³ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.12

¹⁴ *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.4

Reveling in self, delighting in self performing actions he is the foremost among the knower of Brahman.

The concept of *ātmakrīḍā* or *ātmarati* is just being happy in one's ownself. This is the great benefit of yoga which the modern psychologists are envying. What is the greatest psychological problem of Human being? The answer is Loneliness. A person who has trained himself to be calm and finds peace within himself, such a person is very happy. What does it mean by the 'disease' of loneliness? It means that we do not like my own company. If one does not like one's own company, how can other people like his company?

So, the *Bhagavadgītā* says that one's own self is his friend and his own self is his enemy. It reads:

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥¹⁵

'One should lift oneself by one's own efforts and should not degrade one's own self; for one's own self is one's friend and he himself is his own enemy.'

However, the mind has to be guided by the *buddhi*. One pointed *buddhi* clarified and trained to see subtle things. This *buddhi* is called *dhī* in the *Vedas*. The famous *gāyatrī mantra* reads:

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः ।

तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं

भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।

¹⁵ *Bhagavadgītā* 6.5

धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥¹⁶

“We meditate on the adorable glory of the radiant sun; may he inspire our intelligence.”¹⁷

This is one of the most fundamental discoveries of our R̥ṣis, attributed to Visvamitra. Let the Supreme Being who is symbolised by the Sun, kindle my intellect. Intellect or intelligence is a very poor translation of *buddhi*. It is the *Buddhi* which is called *buddhi-guhā*, *hṛdayākāśa*, *prajñāloka* etcetera. Patañjali has termed it *prajñāloka* and says that it is the light which shows the way. The light of consciousness within continuously guides us. This is called *viññānamaya* in the *Vedas*. In Tantra it is called the *anāhata cakra*. When the *kuṇḍalini* awakens and reaches the *anāhata* we feel the divine light. This is a mysterious light which the Christian mystics call the Uncreated light. It is followed simultaneously by an uncreated sound called Anahata. Ahata means struck and *anāhata* means something which is not struck. Spontaneously the sound emerges. It has no beginning and no end. So it is eternal. The unstruck sound, *anāhatadhvani* and the uncreated mystical light which see in the heart are simultaneous. These are the experiences discussed, repeated, recorded, documented, and replicated for thousands of year by thousands of people. So we inherit a great tradition and legacy. Beyond this *viññānamaya* is the *ānandamaya* which is closest to the Ātman or the Brahman.

¹⁶ R̥gveda

¹⁷ S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, London: Allen Unwin, 1953, p. 299.

So matter is at the physical level, *annamaya*. The mind, *manomaya* is matter is a sense, but it is at the subtle level. The link is the *prāṇa*. The first inclination to consciousness begins with the *vijñānamaya*. When the *kuṇḍalinī* reaches the *anāhata* we have the first realisation that we are the spirit living in the body and we are not the body alone. So the idea of Jīvātman, the idea of ātman, the idea of spirit first awakens in us in the *vijñānamaya*. The scripture says that each of the *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijñānamaya* and the *ānandamaya* has a cosmic counterpart. Just we have a microcosm; we have a macrocosm out there. The macrocosmic counterpart of Vijñānamaya is called the Hiraṇyagarbha or the mahat or the mahān ātma. The *Kāṭhōpaniṣad* speaks about it. It reads:

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान्परः ॥¹⁸

‘Beyond the senses are the objects, beyond objects is the mind, beyond mind is the intellect; beyond intellect is the Mahān Ātma.’

From the Mahān the door opens. We further progress and reach the world of Saguṇa Brahman, the Ānandamaya. There we reach almost to the end of consciousness. Ācārya Śaṅkara says that it is not the ultimate, there is something beyond which is the Consciousness Absolute.

Thus the matter, mind, and consciousness are interwoven with each other. None of these are more important, none of these are less important. The problem with the spiritual people is that they underrate the body, the mind, the matter. The problem with the materialist is that they underrate spirituality. None of them should do this. The Consciousness, which is the

¹⁸ *Kāṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.10

Absolute, manifests itself in the relative world of appearances as matter and mind of which *prāṇa* is the link. The much coveted goal of human life is to discover the underlying oneness pervading these. Religion, Science, philosophy, psychology should come together and contribute to the facilitation of the journey to the world of Supreme Truth.

Swami Vivekananda therefore says:

*‘Science and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future, and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and peoples. This is the one way that will prove acceptable to modern science, for it has almost come to it.’*¹⁹

¹⁹Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 1921, Vol. 2, p.140