

Report of Panel Discussion Program of WAVES, 2nd Sep.2019

A Panel Discussion on Social, Spiritual and Scientific Perspectives of Evolution in the Creation [सृष्टि के विकास-क्रम का सामाजिक, आध्यात्मिक एवं वैज्ञानिक परिप्रेक्ष्य] was organized by WAVES-India at Seminar Room, Gandhi Bhawan, University of Delhi, Delhi on 2nd Sep., 2019. The program was presided by Prof. Ramesh C. Bharadwaj, Head, Department of Sanskrit, University of Delhi & Director, Gandhi Bhawan, University of Delhi. Later, Prof. Bhu Dev Sharma chaired the session as Prof. Bharadwaj has some urgent work of University. Renowned scientists - Prof. Bal Ram Singh, Director, Institute of Advanced Sciences, Dartmouth, USA and Member, Board, WAVES USA; Dr. Bhakti Vijnana Muni, Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering and President, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Institute, Bengaluru, Karnataka, and Dr. Bhakti Niskama Shanta, Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering, and General Secretary, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Institute, Bengaluru, Karnataka were present as distinguished panellists.



Program begun with Vedic invocation. Flowery welcome of guests was done by Prof. Shashi Tiwari, President WAVES, Shri Prashant Bhardwaj, Vice-President, WAVES, and Dr. R. S. Kaushal, Member, WAVES. Dr. Ranjit Behera, Secretary, WAVES conducted the session and introduced the speakers briefly. He requested Prof. Bal Ram Singh to moderate the panel-discussion in his own style with invited remarks. Prof. Singh elaborated the theme under discussion very beautifully. He said that every aspect has many perspectives to understand it, but here we are going to think about a very mystical, yet scientific subject which is thoroughly considered by ancient sages, as well as by modern scientists. We have distinguished panel of scientists and learned scholars of various disciplines for the discussion.

Dr. Bhakti Niskama Shanta elaborating the subject stated that- 'Darwin's 'Objective Evolution of Bodies' is a perverted reflection of 'Subjective Evolution of Consciousness' in Vedanta because by over emphasizing the material cause (the aspect of the change or movement of the organism that is determined by the material that the body of the organism composed of) and efficient causes (external forces and chemical bonds which are seen as agency of the change or movement of the body of the organism) Darwinism completely ignores the role of consciousness (*cit*) and soul (*ātman*) in biology. Modern science

hypothesizes that the manifestation of life on Earth is nothing but a mere increment in the complexity of matter — and hence is an outcome of evolution of matter (chemical evolution) following the Big Bang. After the manifestation of life, modern science believed that chemical evolution transformed itself into biological evolution, which then had caused the entire biodiversity on our planet. This ontological view of the organism as a complex machine presumes life as just a chance occurrence, without any inner purpose. This approach in science leaves no room for the subjective aspect of consciousness in its attempt to know the world as the relationships among forces, atoms, and molecules. On the other hand, in contrast to afore mentioned reductionistic view of evolution, Vedanta explains the concept of ‘Organic Wholism’ as the formation principle of this universe. The invocation in *Śrī Īsopanisad* explains “*om̐ pūrnam adah pūrnam idam̐ pūrnat̐ pūrnam udacyate pūrnam udacyate pūrnam ādāya pūrnam evāvaśisyate* – The ‘Organic Whole’ produces ‘organic wholes’. An ‘organic whole’ cannot arise from parts that have to be assembled. That process can only produce inorganic, mechanical or chemical processes, not living organisms.” The Vedāntic view states that the origin of everything material and nonmaterial is sentient and absolute (unconditioned). Thus, sentient life is primitive and reproductive of itself – *omne vivum ex vivo* – life comes from life. This is the scientifically verified law of experience. Life is essentially cognitive and conscious. And, consciousness, which is fundamental, manifests itself in the gradational forms of all sentient and insentient nature. In contrast to the idea of objective evolution of bodies, as envisioned by Darwin and followers, Vedānta advocates the idea of subjective evolution of consciousness as the developing principle of the world’.

Prof. Bal Ram Singh explained scientific theory of evolution. Creation and evolution are different. The development of man depends on the development of bacterial cells so it takes time. All creatures have brain but man’s brain is more developed. This is one way to understand evolution. There is its social perspective also. As says Gita, ‘four *varnas* were created according to qualities and actions of human beings’. To ‘serve other’ is Sudra-varna’s duty. Today all do service and get salary, so all can be called ‘Sudra’. Equality of all creatures is a basic thought to understand concept of evolution in creation. Apparently any two human beings are never the same in looks, speech or nature, neither in present, nor were in the past. Through the notion of *panchkosh* also, we can understand evolution in creation. Prof. Singh emphasised that one should try to integrate science in various perspectives for authentic vision.



Dr. Bhakti Vijnana Muni began his talk with the statement that in Indian traditions, devotion to God (*Bhagvat-prem*) is very important to know the absolute truth (Brahman, the Origin).

Brahman is the non-dual truth and yet it assimilates plurality. According to modern science any complete entity comes from assimilation of parts, as body has many parts. This approach is dualistic. In Vedic approach, complete or absolute substance has power to create. Atman is ultimate vital reality, not the body. That is consciousness which gives life. So life comes from life, not from matter. This spiritual approach is totally opposite of modern science. Moreover 'Matter comes from life' is another axiomatic concept that addresses the question of origin of matter. Neither quantum mechanics nor biology is able to address the questions how consciousness arises and yet they require such concepts to explain the results.

Commenting upon on the subject Prof. Bhu Dev Sharma said that concept of ego or *Ahamkar* is important. One's identity is never lost, even after death. The whole is created from the whole not from the infinite (*Ananta*) according to Vedic sciences. One should not accept a thought without it's understanding, rather he should discuss that again and again. Dr S.C. Goswami debated on the identity of being. He said animal, man and tree are same as living and non-living are identical according to '*Sarvam khalu idam Brahman*' theory of Veda. Matter and consciousness have no absolute barrier to each other. Matter has motion as well. Dr. R.S. Kaushal said creation is from the abstract. This theory has impact on other thoughts too. Dr. Sujeet Kumar said that in our ancient philosophy, there is no theory of evolution. Social discrimination is a contrary idea which should be condemned. Dr S.P.S. Chauhan stated that world is not divided on social basis. Dr. Mohan Chand explained that in various ancient references, world's creation is articulated from 'waters.'



It was a well-attended program. Members of WAVES such as, Dr. Dharma, Dr. Sudha Verma, Dr.Saroj Jain, Dr. Neelam Gaur, Dr. Karuna Arya, Dr. Kamna Vimal Sharma, Ms Synthiya Masi,Dr. Asha Pandey, Dr. Anju Seth, Dr. Vijay Sankar Dwivedi, Dr. Madan Mohan Bajaj, Ms. Anuja Sinha, Dr. Suman Sharma, Jalaj etc. were present in the audience. Dr. Shashi Tiwari proposed a vote of thanks to the chairperson, speakers and the audience. Program ended with *Shāntipāth*.

-Report by WAVES