



Metaphysics and modern science: An approach to human resilience

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In the present era the proposed topic titled Metaphysics and Modern Science: An approach to human resilience is important not merely because the topic is quite engaging, but also, and perhaps chiefly, it is pregnant with immense possibilities while discussing the meaning of human existence. It is idle to assume that Metaphysics and Modern Science are mutually exclusive of each other and that there is absolutely no meeting point between the two. Metaphysics is a phenomenon that prompts us to undertake a meaningful and comprehensive probe into the secrets and mysteries of cosmos. India has been a land of seers and sages, of saints and anchorites, of people gifted with a third eye, with great visionary powers and intuitive insights. Was it a miracle that Vyas could write eighteen Puranas, that anonymous thinkers could write the Upanishads, the Smritis and the Samhitas, that Aryabhata could tell us a good deal about Cosmology, and that Charak and Shushruta could make invaluable contributions, respectively, to the fields of medicine and surgery. People have been laboring under the false and dubious impression that Metaphysics is something vague, entirely based on speculations, that there is no world other than the world we live in, and that materialism, and not spiritualism, is the only item we should always endeavor to care for. The truth of the matter, however, is that Metaphysics lies beyond common human reasoning, that it has logic of its own, and that Vedanta is the highest tribute to human intelligence, resilience and understanding. Metaphysics deals with a world which Stephen Spender calls, 'a world beyond world'. Modern Science and technology may and does have their own achievements; they have indeed contributed to the comforts and conveniences of human life, but at the same time they have also caused a good deal of misery in the form of mass killings, mass destruction and threats of wars in future. Modern Science is limited, while Metaphysics goes without limits. The meeting point of Metaphysics and Modern Science is the element of exploration, for while science explores through experiments, observations and inferences, metaphysics explores through unity of vision. This unity of vision reflects the philosophy of existentialism. Man is a creature who tries to play with unknown things of the world, Nature is one of them. To say that there exist a close and vital relationship between human being and environment is almost axiomatic. To understand Nature to make it sustainable is one of the great challenges to human society today. Is it metaphysics or existential philosophy that gives a way to such problem? It is against this background that I propose to explore the aspects of Metaphysics and the philosophy of existentialism to sustain human against all odds and hurdles.

Metaphysical - Longer definition: Metaphysics is a type of philosophy or study that uses broad concepts to help define reality and our understanding of it. Metaphysical studies generally seek to explain inherent or universal elements of reality which are not easily discovered or experienced in our everyday life. As such, it is concerned with explaining the features of reality that exist beyond the physical world and our immediate senses. Metaphysics, therefore, uses logic based on the meaning of human terms, rather than on a logic tied to human sense perception of the objective world. Metaphysics might include the study of the nature of the human mind, the definition and meaning of existence, or the nature of space, time, and/or causality.

The origin of philosophy, beginning with the Pre-Socratics, was metaphysical in nature. For example, the philosopher Plotinus held that the reason in the world and in the rational human mind is only a reflection of a more universal and perfect reality beyond our limited human reason. He termed this ordering power in the universe "God."

Metaphysical ideas, because they are not based on direct experience with material reality, are often in conflict with the modern sciences. Beginning with the Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution, experiments with, and observations of, the world became the yardsticks for measuring truth and reality. Therefore, our contemporary valuation of scientific knowledge over other forms of knowledge helps explain the controversy and skepticism concerning metaphysical claims, which are considered unverifiable by modern science.

In matters of religion, the problem of validating metaphysical claims is most readily seen in all of the "proofs" for the existence of God. Like trying to prove the existence of a "soul" or "spirit" in the human, attempts to scientifically prove the existence of God and other nonobjective, nonhuman realities is seemingly impossible. The difficulty arises out of the attempt to scientifically study and objectify something which, by its very nature, cannot become an object of our scientific studies. This reigning belief that everything can be explained scientifically in terms of natural causes - referred to as naturalism - compels many to think that only what is seen or sensed, only what can be hypothesized and tested can be true, and therefore, meaningful to us as humans.

Recently, however, even as metaphysics has come under attack for its apparent lack of access to real knowledge, so has science begun to have its own difficulties in claiming absolute knowledge.

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