

THE SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST

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Is Skepticism Heroic?

Many people in the modern times tend to be skeptical about spiritual life and they are often proud of their skepticism thinking it to be sign of their freedom from dependence on any unverifiable schools of thought. However, despite the bluff and bravado of such skeptical people, underneath the veneer, their life is aimless, meaningless and filled with an existential emptiness.

On a deeper examination, one will find that their skepticism does not come from an intelligent inspection and rejection of different spiritual philosophies. Rather it arises from an obstinate determination to enjoy the things of this world irrespective of the facts of life. An American comedian has poignantly stated, 'I have already made up my mind. Don't confuse me with the facts.' Similarly most people who take shelter of skepticism have already decided that wealth, women, wine are the goals of their life. And even if the facts of spirituality - existence of God, the existence of soul, the potency of prayer - are presented to them with scientific evidence and sound logic, they blindly reject these facts so that their materialistic and often hedonistic lifestyle is not disturbed.

The factual miseries of life - bodily disorders, mental anxieties, relationship problems, climatic inconveniences and natural calamities and ultimately old age, disease and death - are an inescapable reality and are a spur for intelligent people to search out a spiritual solution. A skeptic is like a sick person who instead of searching for a competent doctor and medicine, pretends to be healthy - and is proud of his pretense. Though seeming to be bold, skepticism is actually cowardice because a skeptical person does not have the willpower to control his unbridled mind and senses and discipline himself to live a life of spiritual principles. This unwillingness or inability to live a principle-centered life is covered over with a veneer of skepticism, which is used to offer a philosophical justification for an unprincipled life.

Once Srila Prabhupada after giving a discourse in New York was asked a question by a young man, "Swamiji, your philosophy sounds like the philosophy of Buddha." Srila Prabhupada counter-questioned, "Do you follow Buddha?" The person was taken aback. He said, "No". Srila Prabhupada chastised him, "This is the problem with you Americans. You just talk but don't follow anything. Follow Buddha, follow Jesus, follow Krishna, follow someone. Don't just talk."

Here Srila Prabhupada was emphasizing that armchair speculation will get us nowhere. If we follow a spiritual path properly, if it is faulty that will be exposed to us by the fact that we will get no results. And if it is proper, that too will be revealed to us by the fact that we will see transformation in our life. But if we just keep discussing about various paths and don't apply anything, we will get nowhere in life. And that is the ultimate unfortunate destiny of a skeptic. Achieving happiness neither in this life nor in the next, a skeptic simply suffers. On the other hand, a wise person intelligently examines different philosophies and praying to the Almighty God to guide him to what is the ultimate truth and what is the ultimate good for him, he takes a leap of faith. For such a person sooner or later, the best path will be revealed to him and he will be able to attain happiness not just in the next life but also in the next, because his life will be empowered and protected by the universal principles with which he is harmonizing.

Thus skepticism is not a philosophy, rather its a 'foolosophy,' the sophistry of fools

Millions of people since time immemorial and thousands even now have experienced the transforming potency of the Holy Names of God, which has elevated them from confused self-destruction to enlightened self-actualization. Therefore as a test case, as a bold path breaking personality who refuses to follow the beaten track that takes ordinary lesser people to their inevitable destiny of misery, anxiety, old age, disease and death, why not take an intelligent leap of faith and experience for yourself the wisdom of Srila Prabhupada's timeless instruction, "Chant Hare Krishna and be happy"? Why continue to deprive yourself of spiritual empowerment and enrichment In the name of self-destructive skepticism?

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Dedicated to

**His Divine Grace A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada,
The Greatest Spiritual Scientist of the Modern Times**

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