



# The Laboratory Of The Heart

Is there any scientific experiment to prove the existence of God? Certainly, there is. But the experiment is fundamentally different from ordinary scientific experiments. Here's why.

Suppose John has been fishing in a pond for 30 years and has never caught a fish less than five inches. Is he right then in hypothesizing that there are no smaller fish? Not if his net can't catch smaller fish.

For every object we wish to experiment, we need to the right instrument and the right process. God by definition is nonmaterial or spiritual. So, our material senses and instruments can't prove His existence just as a net with a five inch hole can't catch fish smaller than its size.

God being spiritual can be perceived by a spiritual instrument—our own consciousness. Presently, due to our love for material objects, our consciousness has become alert to material stimuli and inert to spiritual stimuli.

So to perceive God, we need to redirect our heart's love from matter to God. Indeed, the scriptures, which are like the scientific textbooks for this spiritual experiment, state that love for God is the price for seeing Him. Love for God is not a vague, abstract concept, but is our intrinsic spiritual nature that can be excavated by the spiritual-scientific procedure given in the Vedic scriptures. Just as we can transform a raw material into a finished product by a scientific process, we can transform our present raw material emotions into refined spiritual emotions centered on love for God and all His children.

Spiritual science thus is not just experimental, but experiential; the experiment is the experience that we have in our own hearts. Does the experiential nature of spirituality make it subjective, unverifiable and so unscientific? No. Because anyone who carries out the experiment properly in the laboratory of his own heart will experience the same progressive results. Let's see what these are:

1. **Shraddha** (Faith): Just as every scientific theory begins with axioms and assumptions (which are nothing but a call to faith phrased in scientific jargon), the spiritual search begins with the basic faith that the spiritual realm exists and can be verified through experience.
2. **Sadhu-sanga** (Association of devotees): Just as a science student associates with and learns from expert scientists, the spiritual student associates with and learns from advanced spiritualists.
3. **Bhajana-kriya** (Adoption of spiritual practices): Just as the experimental verification of a theory requires the creation of a conducive laboratory environment, the experiential verification of spiritual truths requires the creation of conducive environment in the laboratory of our consciousness. This suitable internal condition is established by spiritual practices like mantra meditation and regulative disciplinary practices like no meat-eating, no gambling, no intoxication and no illicit sex.
4. **Anartha-nivrtti** (Removal of impurities): The spiritual experiment gives the intermediate results of decrease of self-destructive internal drives like anger, greed, and envy just like the heating of gold causes the melting away of impurities.
5. **Nishtha** (Conviction): The dramatic positive change that the practitioner experiences within elevates his initial tender faith to an unshakable conviction, which arguments and counter-arguments can no longer disturb.
6. **Ruchi** (Taste): One starts relishing the chanting of the holy names due to the overwhelming taste (pleasure) that it brings.
7. **Asakti** (Attachment): Just as a drunkard is addicted to his drink, the devotee now becomes addicted to God's holy names and becomes absorbed in His divine remembrance.
8. **Bhava** (Divine Emotion): The devotee experiences divine emotions for the Lord – joy, sorrow, anticipation, disappointment – with the same (if not more) immediacy, intimacy and intensity with which a lover experiences emotions for the beloved.
9. **Prema** (Spiritual Love): When these emotions mature into pure, selfless, undistracted love for God, then that love restores our spiritual vision, by which we can see Him, who is love personified, the supremely loving and lovable person, God, Krishna.