

Perceptions of Reality - An Exploration of Consciousness

By Gregory Calise


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Editorial Review

About the Author

Gregory Calise has experienced many variations of life in his search for truth. He has spent fifteen years living overseas in six countries and has traveled through twenty-five countries. He has worked in a variety of occupations, ranging from corporate, personnel and sales management to architecture, ceramics, art, cooking and teaching yoga.

Gregory has researched most religious doctrines, and he has practiced Christianity, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, Vedanta, Vaishnavism, Shamanism, and New Age philosophies. He has lived in Monasteries, gone on pilgrimages, lectured extensively on yoga and lived in the secular community. By experiencing the many paths of life and over thirty years of practicing meditation, contemplation, observation, and devotion, he has received several revelations and has been able to shift his perspective to a higher state of consciousness. From this higher perspective of consciousness the larger picture of reality is perceived, where one can discern the truth from the distortions.

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The Blind Men and the Elephant

There is an old parable from ancient India that shows how our perspective limits our perception. Once there were four blind men that came upon an elephant. The first blind man went to investigate and felt a tusk of the elephant. He concluded that an elephant is smooth, narrow and long, and that he was pointed at the end like a spear. The second blind man felt the trunk of the elephant. He concluded that the elephant was like a giant python. The third blind man felt the leg of the elephant. His conclusion was that the elephant was like a large tree trunk with hair. The fourth blind man felt the elephant's tail. He concluded that the elephant was like a thin hairy snake with a brush on the end.

Now each of these blind men concluded that the elephant was a different and even contradictory object, yet each of them were partially correct in their assumptions. This is because each of them perceived only a partial aspect of the entire object.

This parable gives us an idea of how limited our perceptions can be in describing our reality. In our assumptions of the material world, we are possessing a very limited perception of the complete reality. Each person perceives himself as the center of his universe, so his perceptions of reality are limited to his own personal perspective, which may be very different from someone else's.

Even if we looked at the perceptions of the entire human race, they are limited to our present scientific knowledge of reality. We are also confined to our tiny earth planet. There are billions of stars and galaxies that we know very little about. Our perception of the physical dimension of existence is very small. Beyond this physical earth dimension, there are many other finer, more subtle dimensions that very few people are aware of; and science doesn't even acknowledge their existence. As you can see, our limits of the material reality are very small indeed. There are principles outside of our perception that are very different from our known world. Many of these are even contradictory. Our very limited knowledge of the world is due to the fact that we are perceiving only a partial view of a tiny sector of time and space of the entire cosmos.

This same analogy can be applied to our perceptions of the absolute realm. The majority of the prophets and sages perceive only a partial view of the complete absolute. They may be able to perceive one level or one

aspect of the absolute, and they therefore conclude that the absolute has certain qualities. Now if we study the perceptions of the great sages and prophets, we can find many differences and many contradictory qualities of the absolute. This has given rise to many sectarian and philosophical arguments, what to speak of the creations of the separate religious doctrines.

Some sages describe that the supreme absolute is a great golden light. There are those who say that it is an all-pervading energy. Some describe an all-pervading intelligence, while others perceive him in the hearts of all living entities. Some report that the supreme is a father figure, while others report that the supreme is a mother figure. Some have revealed that the supreme absolute truth is a beautiful, ever youthful blue boy that plays a flute, while others state that the absolute is a vast emptiness. All of these sages are correct in their assumptions, as they have all perceived the absolute truth; yet they have described so many different and even contradictory conclusions. This is because they have viewed only certain aspects or levels of the same supreme absolute Godhead. They have each viewed only a partial manifestation of the complete whole. In the following chapter we will explore this in more detail.

As we can see, our limits of perception are tiny indeed. We are viewing a microscopic portion of the complete reality. In this tiny speck of reality, we perceive certain qualities and principles, and we conclude that we have a grand knowledge of truth. In reality, we know only very little about the whole of creation and even less of the absolute realm. There are many qualities and principles that are very different from what we can perceive.

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