

TIMELESS

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Today's scientists are like religious gurus of earlier times. Whatever they say are accepted as divine truths by lay public as well as the philosophers. When mystics have said that time is unreal, nobody has paid any heed to them. Rather there were some violent reactions against it. Here are some examples:

"G.E. Moore pointed out that if time is unreal then there are no temporal facts: nothing is past, present or future, and nothing is earlier or later than anything else. But, plainly, it is false that there are no temporal facts, for it is a fact that I am presently inscribing this sentence and that my breakfast yesterday preceded my lunch."

- Richard M. Gale

[Book: the philosophy of time, edited by Richard M. Gale, Publisher: Macmillan, 1962, Chapter: Introduction to Section Two, The static versus the dynamic temporal, page 69.]

"First of all, what can be meant by saying that time is unreal? If we really meant what we say, we must mean that such statements as "this is before that" are mere empty noise, like "twas brillig." If we suppose anything less than these – as for example, that there is a relation between events which puts them in the same order as the relation of earlier and later, but that it is a different relation – we shall not have made any assertion that makes any real change in our outlook. It will be merely like supposing that Iliad was not written by Homer, but by another man of the same name. We have to suppose that there are no "events" at all; there must be only the one vast whole of the universe, embracing whatever is real in the misleading appearance of a temporal procession. There must be nothing in reality corresponding to the apparent distinction between earlier and later events. To say that we are born, and then grow, and then die, must be just as false as to say that we die, then grow small, and finally are born. The truth of what seems an individual life is merely the illusory isolation of one element in the timeless and indivisible being of the universe. There is no distinction between improvement and deterioration, no difference between sorrows that end in happiness and happiness that ends in sorrow. If you find a corpse with a dagger in it, it makes no difference whether the man died of the wound or the dagger was plunged in after death. Such a view, if true, puts an end, not only to science, but to prudence, hope, and effort; it is incompatible with worldly wisdom, and – what is more important to religion – with morality."

- Bertrand Russell

[Mysticism, Book: religion and science, Publisher: Oxford University Press, 1961.]

But when scientists have shown that at the speed of light time becomes unreal, these same philosophers have simply kept mum. Here also they could have raised their voice of protest. They could have said something like this: "We will never accept the statement that time is unreal. Then why

are you wasting your valuable time, money, and energy by explaining to us as to how this time can become unreal? Are you mad?" Had they reacted like this, then that would have been consistent with their earlier outbursts. But they had not. This clearly indicates that a blind faith in science is working here. If mystics were mistaken in saying that time is unreal, then why is the same mistake being repeated by the scientists? Why are they saying now that there is no real division of time as past, present, and future in the actual world? If there is no such division of time, then is time real, or, unreal? Thus spake Einstein when his lifelong friend Michele Besso died, "Now he has departed from this strange world a little ahead of me. That means nothing. People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion." And thus spake scientist Paul Davies, "The most profound puzzle of all is the fact that whatever we may experience mentally, time does not pass, nor there exist a past, present and future. These statements are so stunning that most scientists lead a sort of dual life, accepting them in the laboratory, but rejecting them without thought in the daily life." [Book: Other worlds, Publisher: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1980, Prologue, Page 14.] Is this very recent statement made by a scientist that "time does not pass" anything different from the much earlier statement made by the mystics that "time is unreal"?

Now some scientists are trying to establish that mystics did not get their sense of spacelessness, timelessness through their meeting with a real divine being. Rather they got this sense from their own brain. But these scientists have forgotten one thing. They have forgotten that scientists are only concerned with the actual world, not with what some fools and idiots might have uttered while they were in deep trance. So if they at all explain as to how something can be timeless, then they will do so not because the parietal lobe of these mystics' brain was almost completely shut down when they received their sense of timelessness, but because, and only because, there was, or, there was and still is, a timeless state in this universe.

God is said to be spaceless, timeless. If someone now says that God does not exist, then the sentence "God does not exist" (S) can have three different meanings. S can mean:

- a) Nothing was/is spaceless, timeless in this universe (A),
- b) Not God, but someone else has been said to be spaceless, timeless here (B),
- c) Not God, but something else has been said to be spaceless, timeless here (C).

It can be shown that if S is true, and if it is also true that God has been said to be spaceless, timeless, then S can only mean C, but neither A nor B. If S means A, then the two words "spaceless" and "timeless" become as meaningless as the word "brillig" (cited by Russell in his quotation mentioned above). By the word "brillig" we cannot indicate a person, a thing, an action, a property, a relation, or any other thing. Similarly, if S means A, then by the two words "spaceless" and "timeless" we cannot indicate anyone or anything, simply because in this universe never there was, is, and will be, anyone or anything that could be properly called spaceless, timeless. Now the very big question is: how can some scientists find meaning and significance in a word like "timeless" that has got no meaning and significance in the real world? If in this universe time was never unreal, if it is not now, and if it will never be, then why was it necessary for them to show as to how time could be unreal? If nothing in this universe was/is timeless, then it can in no way be the business, concern, or headache of the scientists to show how anything can be timeless. If no one in this universe was/is immortal, then it can in no way be the business, concern, or headache of the scientists to show how anyone can be immortal. So, what compelling reason was there behind their activity here? If we cannot find any such compelling reason here, then we will be forced to conclude that scientists are involved in some useless activities here that

have got no connection whatsoever with the actual world, and thus we lose complete faith in science. Therefore we cannot accept A as the proper meaning of S, as this will reduce some activities of the scientists to simply useless activities.

Now can we accept B as the proper meaning of S? No, we cannot. Because there is no real difference in meaning between this sentence and the sentence “God is said to be spaceless, timeless”. It is like saying that Iliad was not written by Homer, but by another man of the same name (Russell). So, if S is true, then it can only mean that not God, but something else has been said to be spaceless, timeless. Now, what is this “something else” (SE)? Is it still in the universe? Or, was it in the past? Here there are two possibilities:

- a) In the past there was something in this universe that was spaceless, timeless,
- b) That spaceless, timeless thing (STT) is still there.

We know that the second possibility will not be acceptable to atheists and scientists. So we will proceed with the first one. If SE was in the past, then was it in the very recent past? Or, was it in the universe billions and billions of years ago? Was only a tiny portion of the universe in spaceless, timeless condition? Or, was the whole universe in that condition? Modern science tells us that before the big bang that took place 13.7 billion years ago there was neither space, nor time. Space and time came into being along with the big bang only. So we can say that before the big bang this universe was in a spaceless, timeless state. So it may be that this is the STT. Is this STT then that SE of which mystics spoke when they said that God is spaceless, timeless? But this STT cannot be SE for several reasons. Because it was there 13.7 billion years ago. And man has appeared on earth only 2 to 3 million years ago. And mystical literatures are at the most 2500 years old, if not even less than that. So, if we now say that STT is SE, then we will have to admit that mystics have somehow come to know that almost 13.7 billion years ago this universe was in a spaceless, timeless condition, which is unbelievable. Therefore we cannot accept that STT is SE. The only other alternative is that this SE was not in the external world at all. As scientist Victor J. Stenger has said, so we can also say that this SE was in mystics’ heads only. But if SE was in mystics’ heads only, then why was it not kept buried there? Why was it necessary for the scientists to drag it in the outside world, and then to show as to how a state of timelessness could be reached? If mystics’ sense of timelessness was in no way connected with the external world, then how will one justify scientists’ action here? Did these scientists think that the inside of the mystics’ heads was the real world? And so, when these mystics got their sense of timelessness from their head, then that should only be construed as a state of timelessness in the real world? And therefore, as scientists they were obliged to show as to how that state could be reached?

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