



Science of Spirituality

Science and spirituality are two sides of the same coin. Science is the question — Show, what, why? Spirituality, on the other had, is wonder — just wow! Deepening the mystery of creation is science and deepening the mystery of the Self is spirituality. Every scientific discovery leads to the realm of spirituality. If neither science nor spirituality can create wonder and devotion in you, then you are in deep slumber.

“In the Occidental way of thinking, belief comes first, and then experience follows. The Oriental philosophy and science have the same parameter. They both say experience first, and then believe.”

In this part of the world, there has never been a conflict between science and spirituality. Unlike in the West, not even a single scientist was prosecuted. In the Occidental way of thinking, belief comes first, and then experience follows. The Oriental philosophy and science have the same parameter. They both say experience first, and then believe. You have the knowledge first, and then the faith follows. For example, the knowledge that pesticides and chemical fertilisers are good for plants came through science and people developed faith in it and all over the world, people started using them. Then the knowledge that they are not healthy came, and the faith shifted to organic farming. Knowledge brings faith and when knowledge changes, faith also shifts.

Science and spirituality are like two ways of looking at the creation. Science regards life as matter and spirituality regards even matter as life. Spirituality elevates matter to the level of life, level of divinity and adds a sense of honour. While science brings us material and physical comfort, spirituality gives comfort to our souls. Science cultivates logic and spirituality develops intuition, another faculty of enquiry. Ancient rishis (sages) recognised this interplay between science and spirituality and said true fulfilment in life can come only through gyana (spirituality) and vigyana (science).

There is a saying in the Upanishads that reads “padarth, gyanaat, moksha”. It means that if one understands even one particle in the creation thoroughly, he or she will be liberated. One doesn’t even need to believe in God’s existence. Ancient rishis knew that the entire creation is reflected in each particle as consciousness. Today scientists are saying the same thing. The DNA of all the creatures can be created from one human DNA chain. It’s further said that whatever is there in the universe is present in the body of human existence.

The entire creation is one organism - there is life in every particle of this universe. Divinity, one consciousness, permeates the entire creation. God is present in every single atom of this planet and universe.

This establishes that science and spirituality are two ways of looking at the same truth — the objective and the subjective. Through spirituality, India knew from ages that the Earth and other planets are moving round the Sun. Ages before Galileo discovered that the earth is round, India had the concept of the Earth being spherical. Here, the earth was always considered spherical. Likewise, even 15,000 years ago, people knew that Jupiter has got 12 moons. From the times of Vedic age itself, people understood the arrangement of the sun and the planets in the solar system. So India was never ignorant about science; instead it was very advanced from ancient time.

Science is the systematic understanding of what this is. Spirituality is systematic understanding of who am I. We are all made up of spirit and matter. The body is made



HIS HOLINESS SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

Creating a Stress-Free Mind and a Violence-Free World

“Science and spirituality are not separate, they go together. And there can be no dispute about it after the theory of relativity which proved the connection between matter and energy.”

up of amino acids, proteins, minerals, etc. The spirit is made up of beauty, love, joy, enthusiasm and comfort, all that values that enhance life.

These values come only through spirit and as we live the values of the spirit, life attains its richest form. Without them, life becomes very shallow and we are dependent and unhappy. The spiritual dimension of life in the truest form promotes scientific temper. It smashes the narrow boundaries of caste, creed, religion and nationality and gives one a broader awareness of life present everywhere.

When the mind relaxes, the intellect becomes sharp. When the mind is loaded with small things such as ambition, feverishness and desire, then the intellect loses its keenness. And when intellect and observation are not sharp, life does not express itself fully. Ideas don't flow properly and abilities diminish day by day. The possibilities of scientific enquiry get clouded.

To nurture the spirit of scientific enquiry, it is very important for us to probe into the source of thought. Often we are called great thinkers, but what is a thought? Where does it originate? Is there any way that we can improve the thought process? What are the mechanics to make people creative?

Thought is nothing but an impulse of energy and intelligence. For that impulse of energy and intelligence to arise and a correct thought to come, you need 16 impulses to meet at a point in the cerebral cortex at the speed of 10 to the power of minus 30 cycles per second. In that short interval of time, all the 16 impulses in the cerebral cortex, when they meet, is what we call a correct thought. What do we do about it? We need to train our brain, our mind. And that's the purpose of spiritual practices.

Spiritual life enhances imagination, which is the basis of many scientific discoveries. When an imagination comes up, the person will not think whether it is real or not. What appears to be unreal and a pure imagination can bring creativity. Thomas Edison, once upon a time, dreamt of how to create light. It was purely an imagination. Many inventions happened through certain imagination and through linking that imagination to the ground reality. If you are thinking only of the ground reality, then no creativity will come. And also if you based yourself purely on imagination, then there is no creativity. A balance between your intellect and your heart is needed. Listening to your heart is spirituality and developing that sharp and intuitive intellect is science.

People may say that spiritualism begins where science ends, but I do not agree with that. Science and spirituality are not separate, they go together. And there can be no dispute about it after the theory of relativity which proved the interconnection between matter and energy.

Life is like a tree, its branches and leaves are science and the roots are spirituality. A scientific spirituality and a spiritual scientist is the need of the day.