

## **Science and Spirituality**

### **Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj**

Most people think that science and spirituality are totally opposite fields of studies, but I can speak from my experience in both areas that they are two sides of the same coin. To me, the aim of science is to uncover the deepest spiritual truths, and the aim of spirituality is the search for the cause behind scientific fact.

Some of the greatest scientists, when questioned about their discoveries, point to spiritual inspiration or a divine power as the force behind their findings. Albert Einstein, who revealed the theory of relativity and made this nuclear age possible, once said, "I assert that the cosmic religious experience is the strongest and the noblest driving force behind scientific research."

If we look at science today, we find that one of the goals scientists have is to discover how creation came into being, and how human beings came into being. Even this month, one of the newest telescopes hovering above our planet was able to detect some of the earliest remains of the big bang. By picking up signals from light-years away, we can get a glimpse of activity from the distant past whose light is only just reaching us now, billions of years later. Scientists are vying to see who can be the first to discover what happened at the moment of creation. Why? Hidden within human beings is a desire to prove the existence of a force that brought us into creation. Few are satisfied with the theory that creation was a mere accident, a combustion of cosmic dust. Secretly, in every heart, lies the desire to have proof that there is God and we are soul, a part of God. Science exists to uncover these deepest spiritual truths.

On the other hand, those engaged in spirituality are trying to find the hidden cause behind what is scientific fact. They are interested in the scientific laws of nature, but wish to go behind the laws to find the divine law that brought everything into being. While scientists search through outer instrumentation, spiritual scientists search through rising above this plane of existence to higher levels of consciousness. There are few people today who are not familiar with reports of spiritual experiences. While scriptures of all religions speak of spiritual emanations and miracles, the age of science has tried to nullify those reports as myth. But since the 1970's and 1980's a new wave of information has circled the planet. There are numerous accounts of people who have had near-death experiences. Although there have been reports throughout history, it is more prevalent now because modern science has facilities to bring someone back to life who has clinically died. Our modern medical equipment can revive a stopped heart. Thus, we find many who have been brought back to life reporting having spiritual experiences in a world of Light while clinically dead. There are many people who have developed even lower clairvoyance and psychic ability who are able to see those who have passed away and get confirmation of information imparted by the deceased that no one else could have physically known.

In polls and studies, we find more people than not believe in God, the soul, and an afterlife. Such people find no contradiction between science and spirituality. They believe in scientific law as well as spiritual law.

What people take as miracles are nothing more than higher laws hidden from us. Scientists are coming to realize that this universe is not as solid as we thought. Matter is vibrating packets of energy that appear to the physical eye as solid. When we boil the universe

down to basic components we find that it is energy, light, and sound. Performing miracles is nothing more than tapping into energy and manipulating it by power of thought and spirit.

If we look at modern medicine, we find a whole new approach to healing. In the past we thought healing occurred by the administration of certain drugs. Those in a new field of medicine talk about the mind-body connection. They speak of healing the body by healing the mind and using the power of the soul. In some of the greatest medical institutions in the world, doctors are advocating meditation as a way to reduce stress and eliminate stress-related illnesses. Another study reveals that people who spend time in meditation or religious worship recover sooner from surgery than those who do not. We are living in a wondrous age in which the lines between science and spirituality are being blurred.

If you ask some of the greatest scientists how they discovered their inventions or breakthroughs, many of them cite a divine inspiration from a higher power. There is one anecdote from history about Dr. Washington Carver, an African-American who was once a slave, who became a world-famous scientist. He discovered one hundred fifty products that could be made from a sweet potato, and three hundred products from the humble peanut. Once he was asked how he came up with all those discoveries. Dr. Carver replied, "One day I asked God what could be made out of a peanut." God told me, "You have brains; find out for yourself!"

This story illustrates the true relationship between science and spirituality. While God is the inspiration, human beings have a duty to search for knowledge and to make discoveries that can better life for their brothers and sisters on this planet. God could easily create anything here on earth, but God leaves it to human beings to make the discoveries. Human beings have a choice to live for themselves or to devote their lives to the service of others and the betterment of this planet. Some people live their lives only to gratify their own desires and wants. But those who come in contact with a higher power discover that the greatest purpose of our life is to love and serve others. Scientists are such people who do not live for themselves. They devote their lives to better the lives of others. Thus, we find that the mission of spiritual scientists and physical scientists is one and the same. They are both here to find the hidden laws of nature, the higher power that created everything, and use their discoveries to better the lives of others. As the great mystic poet, Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj, wrote: "We are communing with the moon and the stars, but have not reached the heart of our neighbor."

When I was honored with an alumni leadership award from the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago, I was asked what does being a scientist, such as I was in my training, have to do with spirituality. I explained that science and spirituality were not different at all. They both aimed at finding truth, at discriminating between what was truth and what was falsehood. They both aimed at service to humanity.

Those who have chosen science as their field are not much different from those who spend time engaged in the spiritual search. They are both seeking the answers to the same question, but in different ways. While physical scientists gaze at the stars through powerful telescopes and listen to radio waves from distant stars through instrumentation, spiritual scientists gaze at the inner stars and listen to the inner music of the spheres through meditation. They both sit in silence, watching and waiting. They both search for the same answers. The physical scientists are trying to prove God to themselves through the outer eyes and ears, while the spiritual scientists are trying to prove God to themselves through their inner eyes and ears.

In my life I had the best of both worlds. I had scientific training from the premier institution of IIT Madras for my B.S. degree and IIT Chicago for my M.S. degree. I also had training from two of the greatest spiritual scientists of the last century, Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj and Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj. They taught me the art of meditation and listening to and seeing the laws of the universe with the eye of the soul. I find my scientific background helped me question and study spirituality with the point of view of a scientist interested in the scientific method. In the scientific method, we test a hypothesis and carefully make observations. This scientific approach helped me prove the validity of spiritual experiences. Similarly, my spiritual background enabled me to better pursue the study of science. Meditation helps us come in touch with a level of intuition and revelation that gives us the inspiration to uncover scientific truths. As most scientists report, their discoveries came as inspiration. What is inspiration but tapping into the spiritual laws?

I feel that science and spirituality make a great partnership. If those engaged in science spend some time in the silence of their own selves, inspiration will come and lead them to the answers for which they seek. Similarly, if those interested in spirituality apply the scientific law of testing hypotheses in the laboratory of their own body and soul, they will find the results.

For those interested in trying meditation, there is a simple technique I learned from my spiritual mentors. As scientists we can test the power of meditation for ourselves and see where it leads us. To meditate we only need to sit in silence. We can sit in any pose most convenient, close our eyes, and look into the middle of darkness lying in front of us. We need to still our mind from thoughts that can distract us and take our attention away from the inner gaze. Just as we stay focused in looking through a microscope or telescope, we need to stay focused in looking into a still point lying in front of us. To keep any static of mental chattering from disturbing the stillness, we can repeat any name of God with which we feel comfortable. By keeping repetition of the name going mentally, with the tongue of thought, we keep the mind engaged so it does not disturb our gaze. Just as scientists see outer stars, we may be able to catch glimpses of inner lights of any color, inner stars, moons, and suns. Some transcend physical consciousness and enter higher realms of consciousness. Let us sit for a few moments and get a taste of meditation, so that if we wish to pursue it further, we can do so at home.

It is my prayer that you find success in the scientific endeavors in which you have embarked and that the scientific pursuits lead both to the discovery of ways to help make the world a better place as well as to the answers to the questions burning within you to uncover the greatest truths of all time—God, our soul, and the purpose of our life here. God bless you all.