



Science, Spirituality & God Gene

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In recent times there is considerable interest to find common ground and connect between science, spirituality and religion. If the Spirituality is the soul, the religion is the body with different shapes, colors and practices. Religion is a like natural river. At the point of origin, it is pure and clean. On the way it gets contaminated. Great Saints and visionaries started religion based on noble thoughts in the best interests of community living. The ardent and jealous followers made them compartments creating divisions in the people. With time, the religion has become dominant and individualistic, creating sects and conflicts, destroying the very basis of its foundation ie. the Spirituality which it is supposed to propagate. Hence there is considerable dialogue on Science and Spirituality nowadays.

Science and technology have provided considerable comforts but still no peace on earth, questioning the limitations of science and justifying the need for imbibing spiritual values of love, compassion, sacrifice and concern to Nature and environment. Science is objective experience with limit sense perception and demonstrable while Spirituality is subjective experience based on individual effort and extra sensory perception. Hence the Truth of Science itself got limited to only that knowledge which was gained through limit senses.

Science is understanding based on matter while spirituality is understanding based on mind or consciousness. Spirituality is one step beyond science and hence all great scientists and scholars become spiritual. Core impulse of science and spirituality is the same - The Quest for Truth. Hence, Science and Spirituality should complement each other for individual growth and understanding of Nature's creation, which is happening today.

The one area that has great potential for collaboration between Science and Spirituality is the study of the mind, consciousness and human behaviour. The findings show that, 'The monks (during meditation) showed greater signal in every part of the brain compared to control group (new meditators), especially in parts of the brain related to attention', says Prof. Davidson.

The MBSR (Mindfulness - Based Stress Reduction) Programme, a pioneering effort at university of Massachusetts Medical Centre, USA, that integrated mindfulness meditation practice into the mainstream of medicine and health care for treating the patients suffering from stress related problems. His Holiness the Dalai Lama - has become involved in a modern - day dialogue between Science and Spirituality under the aegis of the 'Mind and Life Institute', on various topics such as Sleeping, Dreaming, Dying, Compassion, Cosmology, Destructive emotions, Nature of matter, Nature of life etc.

In India, Science and Spirituality have always gone together. Besides knowledge of the external world, there is knowledge of the inner world or knowledge of our true nature. Yogic science includes gathering of inner knowledge through reason and experimentation. It includes



practices such as *asana, pranayama, ritual, mantra and meditation*. It can reveal knowledge not only of our ordinary body and mind, but of all aspects of the collective and cosmic minds, extending to the very processes of creation.

In the light of Quantum theory elementary particles were not real like other objects of daily life and verge on the borderline of existing and non-existing. Max Planck's idea of consciousness in material reality, Tablot's concept of an omnijjective universe, Wheeler's concept of self-organising systems - all removed the age-old division between mind and matter, pointing to the possibility of Consciousness as Creator (*Kundan MN, TOI, Jan 05*).

Nanduri says that Science of Cosmic Philosophy attempts integration of Science of Philosophy (*Vedas, Upanishads & Yoga*) and the philosophy of science (Plasmas, electromagnetic field and cosmology).

When Time (Oct 25, 04) magazine came out with an article 'Is God in our Genes?', in the worlds of science and religion, provocative questions were raised, which came first, God or the need for God? If some people are more spiritual than others, is it nature or nurture that has made them so? There is a growing sense that humans may not be able to survive without religion / spirituality. Hamer, a molecular geneticist who studied 2000 persons through series of a questioner and genome analysis, identified a gene named VMAT2, associated with voluntary and involuntary movements of the body through the release of mood altering chemicals or neurotransmitters. He claims that human spirituality is an adaptive trait and also inherited genetic component and the tendency to be spiritual is part of genetic make up. He found that with a single nucleotide polymorphism out of 3.4 billion nucleotide bases contained in the human genome showed marked reduction in self-transcendence in the person concerned.

Age-old Indian philosophy accepts the existence of inherited traits or *vaasanas* in humans. Spirituality may not be attributed solely to a single or group of genes. The casual body or the *kaarana sarira* that vedic literature spoke of, is analogical to genes (Kurup, Bhavan's Journal, April 2006). These *vaasanas* (a term which can not be literally translated as genes) are responsible for the functioning of mind and intellect, and are comparable to the building blocks (or genes) of modern-day genetics. However, *vaasanas* would lie beyond comprehension of sense organs unlike genes which are conceived through data collected by sense organs. The Infinite can be perceived, but not through sense organs and it is in this sense that science and Vedanta disagreed with each other. The vedic culture categorically accepts the fact that everything is divine in nature. Possibly this is where, meditation helps in purification of mind thus in turning bad man into a good man. Further refinement of the vedantic tenet takes one to the concept of 'consciousness' which is nothing but the all pervading *Brahman*, formless, attribute less, pure and transcendent, in other words, God.

[This write up is based on numerous articles on spirituality published in *Life Positive, Tattvaloka, Bhavan's journal, Akhand Jyoti, Time Magazine, Yoga Sudha, Yog Sandesh, Tapovan Prasad, Yoga the Science, Yuva Bharati and The Speaking Tree, TOI.*]

