

Science and Spirituality

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The debate between science and spirituality always takes direction where scientist tries to debunk spirituality portraying it figment of imagination while a spiritualist thinks of science as purely materialistic in nature hence incapable of comprehending God. Rather than seeing these two aspects of human research as contradictory, I would like to look at them complimentary. Following essay is as an effort towards that goal.

One of the greatest scientists of all time Albert Einstein's famous quotation is, *"Try and penetrate with our limited means the secrets of nature and you will find that, behind all the discernible concatenations, there remains something subtle, intangible and inexplicable. Veneration for this force beyond anything that we can comprehend is my religion. To that extent I am, in point of fact, religious."*

In simple terms what Einstein is trying to say is that behind objective universe there is still a subtle and invisible force which is not in the grasp of human intellect. Einstein had a gut feeling about something superior behind manifested reality but it was proven conclusively as science moved on to new frontiers after him.

To understand this better I am going to take you few centuries before Einstein.

There was a great scientist called Newton who devised a model called Classical physics. He formulated laws of Gravity and motion. Applying those laws to bigger object one could easily predict positions and motions of sun, moon, planets and stars. It made understanding of the universe simpler. While this theory was a great success for Macro universe, it failed miserable for micro universe. As we got the ability to observe micro universe which is atoms, electrons, protons etc. it was found that these micro particles do not follow the laws of classical physics as stated by Newton. Scientist started looking for answers and what came forth was a new branch of physics called Quantum Physics. It provided wave equations that could provide all the answers that classical physics was failing at.

But this theory came with two principles, discontinuity and action at a distance (non locality), which turned world view upside down and moved physics from the domain of pure mathematics to the realm of consciousness.

Principle of Discontinuity means that an electron jumps from one orbit to another without going through intermediate space or time. It ceases to exist in one orbit and instantaneously appears in the next orbit. This is the first profound discovery that changes classical world view where every object needs to move through space time all the time.

Principle of non locality or action at a distance means two objects can communicate and influence each other irrespective of their distance in space without the need of intermediating agent or mechanism. It is experimentally proven that twin atomic particles interact with each other instantaneously even though they are separated by light years away.

In short Quantum mechanics is asking us to look at the reality from completely new perspective. Space and time really does not exist the way classical physics always taught us. So what was amiss in classical physics that quantum mechanics has got hold of? Well, the greatest discovery of quantum mechanics which has taken it one step closer to spirituality is the inclusion of the Observer. There is no objective universe independent of an observer. Electron moves as a cloud of probability inside an atom. Only when a conscious observer makes an observation it takes a position. Till then it's just mathematical probability.

Light is a wave as well as a particle, when observer chooses to look at it as a wave it appears as a wave and when observer wants to look at it as a particle it appears as a particle. If one removes the observer then light is nothing but reality un-manifested. It has the potential to become a wave as well as particle.

Bottom line is: "Conscious Observer is an integral part of the reality rather it shapes the reality."

So here we come to the conclusion that although it is important to understand physical nature it is more important to understand the consciousness. So there has to be a shift of focus from outside to inside.

This is where spirituality excels. Spirituality always understood the importance of the self in the whole equation and hence focused on self understanding or self discovery using various paths/religions/beliefs. Aim of all these practices is the same – "To Know Thyself"

Saints and Sages contemplated on it then they found the answer. They declared we are all eternal super conscious beings. We have no death as we were never born. We are drops from the eternal and infinite ocean of divinity and this whole manifested universe appears out of this formless and goes back to it.

Relation between Formless Super Consciousness who is the Creator of the In-Form Physical and Mental Universe, the Creation is best described by following verse from the most ancient religious text of Hinduism

***"Om purna mada purna midam
Purnaat purnam udachyate
Purnasya purnam adaaya
Purnam eva vasishyate
Om shanti shanti shantih"***

This means:

"Creator is perfect,
His Creation is perfect too;
From the Creator, the Creation arises;
Taking away the Creation from the Creator,
The Creator still remains perfect"

Contemplating on above verse we understand that there is no objective reality or manifestation independent of the creator. Creation or the Universe is one of the infinite dreams of the Creator (Conscious Observer) that he chose to observe.

Combining above verse with the understanding of Quantum mechanics principles we could conclude that Consciousness is the source of manifestation of observed universe. That makes Consciousness as an entity beyond time, space and causation.

In Spiritualist vocabulary this Consciousness is called as Atman or Brahman or Soul or Spirit. Once one has true understanding of the entity involved, these different names should not bother anymore.

Spirituality was always the path of self discovery and that's why it was considered subjective and ignored by scientific minded non spiritual people. Today science has opened up to the idea of including Conscious Observer in the equation and rightly so. Today time has come to combine both science and spirituality together for a greater success of mankind in the pursuit of true knowledge.