

SCIENCE AND MYSTICISM

Too often mystics tend to take no part in the efforts made by scientists to break through the mysteries of humanity, nature, and the universe. On the other hand, we cannot deny that many scientist feel themselves obliged to ridicule the precepts of the mystical philosopher. The following information will explain why science and mysticism in no way constitute opposing spheres.

The greatest and most progressive scientists admit that their discoveries are based on intuition. And as the genuine Masters of mysticism emphasize, Illumination becomes fruitful only when it is put to good use and invested in physical knowledge. **(A good point here to scientifically document the effects of harp music by patients).** Scientific exploration of the outer and material universe and that of the inner and spiritual universe constitute two aspects of a fundamental human propensity. Therefore, let's look at the relations that have existed in the past between science and mysticism.

In the distant past, there was evidently no conflict between sacred and material knowledge. The priests in charge of the Egyptian mystery schools were also masters of social science. They were scribes, historians, mathematicians, astronomers, geometricians, architects, physicians, and surgeons. In ancient Greece, Pythagoras was a master of mysticism. He was also a scientist in the full meaning of the term. The geometrical theorem which bears his name still puzzles many students, and his contribution to the theory of solids, to music and numbers is also important.

In the Middle Ages, Western science sank into a profound decline. It is interesting to note that the only valuable work in this period was that done by alchemists. This much-labeled group of people had the mystical aim of physical and moral transmutation. However, their researches subsequently led to the building of the foundations of chemistry and of many crafts and professions such as ceramics and medicine.

In more recent times, Descartes, inventor of analytical geometry, was profoundly interested in the concept of *being*. His maxim *Cogito, ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am") reveals the mystical philosopher in him. As for Newton, founder of modern physics, he considered the spiritual realm to be more important than all of his scientific achievements, even though his researches had inclined him more toward the study of the Bible than toward any mystical adventure. Baron Leibnitz, German contemporary of Newton and inventor of calculus, was an eminent mystical philosopher as well as a great diplomat and scholar. In the 18th century, Emmanuel Kant, metaphysician and philosopher, made a name for himself in science by a theory about the way our solar system was formed. His ideas are today still considered by many astronomers to be fundamentally sound. Among the scientists of the 20th century the greatest - such as Einstein, Jeans, Eddington, Heisenberg, and Schrodinger - show a profound reverence for the mysteries of life, and a good many of them resolutely demonstrate a mystical attitude.

These few examples show that science and mysticism have often been advanced by the same individuals. Today, there seems to be some conflict between some sciences and mysticism. Few people would say that a quarrel exists between mysticism and such sciences as archeology, history, law, or philosophy. But for most of them, these sciences do not represent with a capital "S". They think rather that Science refers to the whole of the natural sciences, the application of which has brought about modern industries and comforts, but also, unfortunately, armaments. **(This is where allopathic medicine can appear to be closed to subtle energies such as Reiki, Aromatherapy, Sound Vibration, QiGong etc.)**

There are many reasons why, beginning with the end of the Middle Ages, that this separation began to take place. Combined with the age of enlightenment, new personal freedom from Church doctrines, the rapid development of modern civilization with new tools and methods and the technology, new ways of testing and proving developed that did not always encompass an understanding of natural phenomena.

Why does science strive to discover the simplest relationship uniting all known facts and why does it seek a fundamental formula unifying all physical laws? Because, deep down, it is convinced of the simplicity, stability, and unity of all nature. In this regard science agrees with the mystical belief in a cosmic order rather than an absurd chaos.

The description of the scientific method helps us to understand what type of person is the true scientist: one who is animated by an insatiable curiosity. Their thirst for knowledge allows scientists to endure long years of work without apparent results while depriving themselves of material comforts that a commercial application of their talents would afford them. They are scrupulously honest and will never allow a questionable experiment to serve as the basis of some spectacular pretension. They love and demand liberty - the liberty of access to results obtained by their predecessors and the liberty to divulge their own discoveries in such a way that the universal fraternity of scientists may solve problems too vast for a single individual.

Creative scientists use various faculties of the mind. They start by concentrating on experimental facts not yet understood. Then they meditate on discoveries made by themselves or by others without paying too much attention to accidental irregularities. This shows that the best scientists are those who know how to relax and meditate passively and wait for inspiration - that flash of intuition so necessary to every important advancement of science.

True mystics likewise start their researches with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. They too want to simplify and unify the disconcerting multiplicity of experiences. They too strive to advance toward a final unity, but the object of their researches differs from that of materialist scientists. They are principally concerned with the inner world of consciousness rather than the outer realm of matter. They maintain that consciousness is fundamental, and without it we could not have knowledge of the outer world.

Another basis of the mystic's personal experience is his or her own body which, for the mystic, is of more importance than the external world of physicists, in that the physical sense organs are the only avenues through which this external world can be perceived by the consciousness. Mystics therefore recognize the existence of a close relationship between body and consciousness, and they make it an object of research.

However, they know that the consciousness is not entirely enslaved by the body. Thus, their experiments often concern the power enabling consciousness to act outside the body. Mystics also study the influence that other people's and bodies may have on themselves and on their surroundings. Finally, they arrive at the fundamental unity formed by the consciousness of all beings between themselves and the Supreme Consciousness of the universe. As a guide in their personal research, they study the accumulated wisdom of the ages, just as scientists study previously available methods and facts before undertaking any experimentation

To make progress in their endeavors mystics likewise need perseverance and sincerity. They must be capable of concentrating on their work, of contemplating the results obtained, and of meditating to prepare the way for the intuition and inspiration which impel their progress toward illumination. And, like mystical scientists, scientific mystics feel that their work progresses better in an atmosphere of freedom of thought and of open access to the teaching of wisdom. (Isn't it wonderful we have the support of San Diego Hospice and all of the places supporting the importance of subtle energies for healing?!).

In only one respect does the inner work of mystics differ from that of scientists: in science an experiment of the mechanical type may be repeated endlessly and, while each test may yield slightly different results, the average of a large number gives a trend which is verifiable by any other person. An inner experiment, while absolutely convincing for the person experiencing it, cannot be repeated at will, even by the same person, as the state of consciousness changes and is not subject to mechanical control.

(This is where our research on the benefits of harp music is really tested because so many of the responses are subjective even though we are using a Likert scale to try to obtain concrete data.) Despite this particular character of the mystical experience, the history of thousands of years shows that all the great mystics, throughout widely differing cultures, are in essential agreement. Apart from this intrinsic difference between the impersonal character and relative uniformity of matter and the differentiation of consciousness due to individuality, we may state that true scientists and genuine mystics are people with similar characteristics and aspirations.

There still remains a fear and antagonism of mystical subjects to some scientists. Such fears might be considered as unfounded in such enlightened times as these. However, authoritarian governments nevertheless interrupt the free flow of scientific communications and distort theories and experiments to adapt them to their own ideologies. In certain parts of the United States, the teaching of the theory of evolution is forbidden by law. Such laws could become a lever denying all teaching relating to science. It must be recognized that scientists have a right to fear and oppose all negative interference on the part of marginal groups, and that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. And, true mystics should likewise take part in this conflict, because they too must defend liberty of thought against all extremist theories expressed by people of religious, political or scientific prejudices.

Mysticism has as much need of science as science has need of mysticism, for these two areas of inquiry complement each other. All important advances in science require inspiration. We must not forget that mystical fulfillment profits the individual only if its fruits are put to work here and now in the material world. No one can work effectively in this world with the worldly knowledge called *science*. There may be quarrels between scientists and mystics but science and mysticism are not enemies. They complement each other and strive, each in their own way, to overcome ignorance, superstition, and fear. Jointly, they help humanity understand the harmony and unity of the universe, in which the mind and the body are both at home.