

Essay

On Scientific Spirituality

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Abstract

In this essay, the author will explain that products of reason are no doubt important in the solution of many problems, however, there are situations where they are inadequate. Then, it becomes necessary to transcend reason in the pursuit of the domain of consciousness where all discoveries are thought reside. Limiting ourselves to the products of reason is analogous to fighting with one hand tied behind the back. Both methods of discovery will be required if we are to successfully tackle the myriad of challenges facing humanity such as global warming, renewable energy, desalination, etc.

Keywords: Scientific spirituality, science, reason, intuition, discovery.

In a recent commencement address at Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, Chief Justice of India Shri N. V. Ramana remarked, “Unfortunately, the modern education system tends to focus only on the utilitarian function and such a system is not equipped to deal with the moral or spiritual function of education which builds the character of students and allows them to develop a social consciousness and a sense of responsibility.”

It is possible to offer a scientific explanation for why the spiritual component is absent, how it is essential, and what the benefits of its inclusion will be.

To begin, science is the appropriate body of knowledge to use when the fundamentals of the system under scrutiny are well understood, and when they are not, but measurements are available, data-driven methodologies such as six sigma can be used. When the system fundamentals are not well understood and measurements are unavailable, then, these two methods cease to be useful. Enhancing the focus of attention remains the only route to new discoveries.

A scientist proposes a hypothesis, designs experiments, conducts experiments, collects data, and subjects the data to hypothesis testing to ascertain if the hypothesis should be accepted or rejected. This is science of reason. Sciences, laws, policies, and the like are all products of reason.

A seer, on the other hand, proposes a hypothesis, goes into meditation, finds the solution, experientially validates the finding, and tests the solution with followers to decide if the findings

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should be accepted or rejected. This is science of creation. Both methods of discovery are essential for human progress. So, why is the world limiting its pursuits to products of reason?

It is because much of the world continues to subscribe to the philosophy of renowned 18th century German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, which says, “*All knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason*”.

Much of the progress humanity has made since the renaissance period is due to scientific discoveries in Northern and Western Europe, and subsequently in the United States. Most Nobel prizes in sciences continue to go to scientists in the United States. Thus, it becomes easy to fall into a trap and conclude that products of reason are quite sufficient, there is no need for spirituality.

Why reason alone may not be sufficient

There are several examples where the products of reason have not delivered success. Take racial harmony for example. The 13th amendment to the US Constitution abolished slavery in 1865, and a number of laws have been passed since then, including the 1965 Civil Rights Act, which bars discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, gender or national origin, and yet, racial discord persists, and may well have grown worse in recent years.

Need for spirituality

In direct contradiction to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, Swami Vivekananda asserts, *Indian thought dares to seek, and successfully finds something higher than reason*. Vivekananda was an Indian monk revered in India, and widely respected in the United States (The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal).

As corroborative evidence, intuition is immediate cognition without the benefit of the five senses and the rational mind. Purposeful inculcation of intuition means that there is definitely something higher than reason.

Recently, Bollywood mega star Amitabh Bachchan hosted an eleven-year old girl, Vanshi Chauhan on his hugely popular TV program, Kaun Banega Crorepati, India’s version of Who Wants to be a Millionaire. Bachchan reportedly has a following of 29 million fans on Instagram. On the show, Vanshi read from the book that the studio team provided, blind-folded. As an example of the widely-held belief in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, the Federation of Rationalist Associations in India approached and persuaded Sony Entertainment Television to edit out that segment from the archives for being unscientific.

Relatedly, Universal Peace Foundation founded by my Yoga Guru, H. H. Gurumahan, has designed a seven-day yoga program to enhance intuition among children 6 to 14 years of age. See this video clip showing the tremendous rise in intuition among the children pursuant to the program. Three hundred and fifty children have been trained so far, and the success rate is 80%. I

have witnessed a live demonstration of the program, and have video clips from that demonstration.

No product of reason can design such a program. The relevant question to ask is, does the program work at a six sigma level of confidence, not whether we understand why or how the program works. Let the future seers and scientists unravel that mystery. Gurumahan went into his annual three weeks of meditation with no food on December 19, 2021 for world peace, and this is his 32nd year.

There are numerous discoveries from ancient India that are beyond the domain of reason, since the knowledge therein could not have been sourced from previous knowledge as there was none. The Vedas are an example. The Vedas were reportedly admired by the likes of Erwin Schrodinger, Werner Heisenberg, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Niels Bohr and Nikola Tesla. See this video by astronomer Carl Sagan on Rigveda and Creation. Sagan wrote the story for the popular Hollywood film, "Contact."

In Sanskrit, discoveries beyond the realm of reason go by the name *Shruti*, meaning revealed (not remembered), and they occur when the focus of attention is sufficiently enhanced either purposefully, as in meditation or prayer, or unknowingly. Actually, all discoveries occur when the focus of attention is enhanced. The discoveries of Albert Einstein and S. Ramanujan are well-known examples.

Wikiquote quotes Albert Einstein as saying, "I believe in intuitions and inspirations. I sometimes feel that I am right. I do not know that I am. When two expeditions of scientists, financed by the Royal Academy, went forth to test my theory of relativity, I was convinced that their conclusions would tally with my hypothesis. I was not surprised when the eclipse of May 29, 1919, confirmed my intuitions. I would have been surprised if I had been wrong."

Ramanujan was barely a high school graduate, but he would write down complex mathematical theorems and their proofs without knowing the steps in between. He told his mentor at Cambridge, G. H. Hardy, that the discoveries come to him in prayer, sometimes in sleep. Ramanujan was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, UK for his contributions to mathematics. Jagadguru Shankaracharya published the book, "Vedic Mathematics: Sixteen simple mathematical formulae from the Vedas" in 1965 but the formulas are nowhere to be found in the Vedas. It is probable that the formulas came to him in meditation.

A word of caution, shruti discoveries, once made, must nonetheless meet the constraints reason imposes on all knowledge. That is, such discoveries must be corroborated and validated. This is a requirement in all six sigma activities. The upshot of the foregoing discussion is that sciences of reason and science of creation are both essential for progress.

On Spiritual Progress

Spiritual progress occurs when the domain of reason is transcended in the pursuit of domain of consciousness where all discoveries reside. This may happen unknowingly, as it did to Albert

Einstein, or to Indian seers as they did purposefully through meditation. An indication of spiritual progress is a rise in internal/emotional excellence. Emotions can now be estimated (EQ Radio, Bio-Well) and so, progress can be audited. Internal/emotional excellence has nothing to do with race, caste, or religion, gender or national origin.

Benefits of Including the Spiritual Component

Incorporation of a spiritual component in life will deliver a myriad of benefits, in addition to the prospects for new discoveries:

- Several years ago, I discovered that the performance in the external world is hugely and negatively impacted by an inadequate level of internal excellence. Raise internal excellence and the performance will zoom. See this article in BizEd, a Publication of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the body that accredits B-School curricula in the United States.
- There are health & wellness benefits of pursuing higher levels of emotional excellence.
- Intuition is linked to internal excellence and leadership. Leaders are often called upon to make split-second decisions at a moment's notice.
- Improvements in Interpersonal relationships, and less discord and violence. \
- The spiritual component builds character and develops a sense of social responsibility, and since emotions can be measured, progress can be audited.

In Closing

This essay has explained that products of reason are no doubt important in the solution of many problems, however, there are situations where they are inadequate. Then, it becomes necessary to transcend reason in the pursuit of the domain of consciousness where all discoveries are thought reside. Limiting ourselves to the products of reason is analogous to fighting with one hand tied behind the back. Both methods of discovery will be required if we are to successfully tackle the myriad of challenges facing humanity such as global warming, renewable energy, desalination, etc.

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