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## Understanding Spirituality and Science in Indian Context

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**I**t has been generally maintained that the traditional Indian culture is predominantly spiritual. Some scholars have gone to the extent of saying that Indian thought is only spiritualistic and the Western thought, in contrast, is materialistic, implying as if Indian thought is not materialistic and Western thought is not spiritualistic. Without evaluating these extreme views it can certainly be said that there can be no denying the truth that Indian sages and saints have always emphasized the spiritual dimension and character of our life and existence. Though we have a large amount of expository literature, both in the vernaculars and in the European languages, highlighting this point, there seems to be little clarity as to what is exactly meant by the term **spiritual**. A distinction is usually drawn between **spiritual** and **material** using these terms in their western connotations as mutually exclusive, but there is a good deal of confusion as to the meaning and the nature of relation between the two when they are used in Indian context. The confusion becomes more confounded when some other terms like **moral** and **religious** are introduced in the analysis. The situation becomes the worst when terms like **mystical**, **idealistic**, etc. are brought in or when spiritualism, or spirituality, is misunderstood as spiritism, occultism, etc.

The root cause of the trouble is that the Sanskrit word **adhyātma**, which is intended here, is represented by the English word **spiritual** without clarifying the subtle nuances associated with the original Sanskrit word. That is why whenever the word **spiritual** is used, most of us claim to understand, or at least pretend to understand, what is meant but when it comes to conceptual clarity and precision, difficulties crop up. The confusion with regard to the meaning of the word **spiritual**

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cannot be cleared up so long as either we do not use the original word **adhyātma** or do not disabuse ourselves of the nuances associated with it in the Western usage. There is nothing wrong or infelicitous either in retaining the original as a technical term or in using its English translation but when its English translation is used, there is a need to clarify and specify its exact meaning and it should not be left as vague, ambiguous or amorphous.

Here it may not be out of place to point out that disregard of the dynamics of the language and overlooking of the nuances, subtleties and complexities of the key culture-specific words of individual languages often result in serious aberrations, distortions and mutilations in the conveyance of thought. A great deal of confusion and misunderstanding has been advertently or inadvertently perpetuated by faulty translations of some key Sanskrit words into English and other European languages. English rendering of the Sanskrit word **dharma** as a religion is a well-known and glaring example of faulty linguistic operation, destroying its richness, complexity, depth and comprehension. It is high time for us to realize that no culture can grow if its key concepts get fossilized, twisted or distorted and its intellectuals lose the capacity of rectification or creative interpretation to suit the new and changing requirements.

In this paper an attempt has been made to rectify the prevailing misunderstanding and to offer a creative interpretation of the word **adhyātma** and its equivalent English word spiritual keeping the Indian context in view. In Indian Culture the term **adhyātma** stands for a particular view and a way of life and reality and a particular attitude that there is one unitary principle which pervades and animates the entire universe and provides its source and sustenance. There are innumerable expressions of this belief such as *etādātmyamidam sarvam, ātmā vāidameka evāgre āsit* etc. The variegated world of multiple animate beings and inanimate things, the vast and unending cosmic process, all that was, all that is and all that shall be, is enlivened by it and it underlies them all. There is one **Ātman** permeating all whatever be their material confinements or embodied status. Of course, in philosophical literature we have varied accounts of this belief and sometimes even a jarring and discordant note is available, but the dominant trend is that one and the same homogeneous principle finds its expression in heterogeneity.

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Oneness of the entire reality is the basic presupposition and guiding principle of spiritualistic approach and, therefore, realization of that oneness has been postulated as the *summum bonum* of all existence. Beginning with the Vedic vision of the unity of the entire cosmos as depicted in the **Puruṣa sūkta** and coming through the **Upaniṣadic** realization of its divinity as expressed in passages like *Īśāvāsyamidam sarvam*, this spiritualistic approach has found its highest manifestation in the **Bhagavadgītā** when it reiterates that *Sarvabhūtasthamātmānam sarvabhūtāni cātmani. Ikṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ*.

There are many passages in the **Upaniṣads** and the **Gītā** to this effect. The same is echoed in the epics and the **Puraṇas**. The Indian spiritualistic vision has enjoined the self in all beings and all beings in the self. It has exhorted us to get engaged in the welfare of all beings, with malice towards none and with friendliness and compassion for all. This has been the quintessence of the **Buddhist, Jaina** and **Sikha** traditions and this also has been the perennial message of all the saints and sages at all periods of time throughout the country. In modern times, **Swāmi Vivekānanda** and **Mahātmā Gāndhī** and many others have highlighted this truth. Only a heightened spirituality of Indian seers could make them project the lofty ideal of *vasudhaivakutumbakam* and the pious longing of *sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ*. Could there be a better expression of spirituality than the Vedic prayers of *saṁgacchadhvaṁ samvadadhvaṁ saṁ vo manānsi jānatām. Samāni va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ samānamastu vo mano yathā vaḥ susahāsatī. (Rgveda X 190.4)* Could there be a more enlightening *upadeśa* to a pupil than *Aum saha nāvavatu saha nāu bhunaktu saha vīryam karavāvahai tejasvināvadhitamastu mā vidviṣāvahei?* Could there be any better vision of universal peace and plenitude than the famous **Śāntipāṭha** of *Aum dyauḥ śāntirantarikṣa śāntiḥ pṛithivī śāntirauśadhayaḥ śāntiḥ vanaspatayaḥ śāntirviśve devāḥ śāntirbhrāhma śāntiḥ sarva śāntiḥ śāntireva śāntiḥ sāmā śāntiredhi. (Yajurveda Samhita, 36.17)*

This expression of spiritual unity is not a mere lofty ideal of utopian dream or empty talk. There have been examples of great souls who have practiced this way of life. If some people could practice it why others cannot do so? Even if it is a view of life, it is at the same time undoubtedly a desirable way of life. It may be difficult to practice it but it not impossible to do so.

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It is unfortunate that it has by and large remained a vision only but this in no way diminishes its viability or desirability. Hypocrisy, deceit and contradictions are inherent in human nature but they are not incurable. Through proper education, it is possible to bridge the gulf between the theory and its practice.

In order to properly understand and appreciate the spiritual approach to life and reality one has to adopt an organismic view point which can have several forms like *sarvātmavāda*, *anātmavāda* or *anekāntavāda* which are all alternative formulations of the same *dr̥ṣṭi*. Various traditions, thinkers and scholars have used different expressions to verbalize this unique perception. This is *ādhyātmika dr̥ṣṭi*. This is not available to the materialistic worldly beings like us who are conditioned by a divisive mentality of “I” and “thou”. It requires a specific frame of mind, a *bodhi citta*, a *sthitadhi* that can be cultivated by a proper training of body, will and intellect. Different spiritualistic traditions have prescribed different schemes of *sādhana* for this. All mean to say the same thing but diversity of language has created conflicts among them. In fact, *samjñasu kevalamayam viduṣām vivādaḥ* (Quarrel among scholars is only verbal).

The spiritualistic view can best be explained in terms of three-fold approaches to reality, i.e. *ādhyātmika*, *ādhidāivika* and *ādhibhautika* which have existential but no valuational hierarchy. They have distinct status and role to play but each succeeding one is enveloped and accommodated in the preceding one. Here there is no incompatibility or conflict. There is gradual widening of the latter in the former. The *ādhyātmika* is the most comprehensive. The **Vedas** have referred to it as *tadekam*. The **Upaniṣads** have named it as Brahman/Ātman. The **Jainas** have called it as *anata dharmātmakam sat*. The **Buddhists** have called it as *Dharmadhātu*, *paramārtha* or *śūnya*.

In a spiritual framework the material and the mental have an important place and function. In spirituality there is no denial of matter and material prosperity. Matter is the base and very precondition of all existence. As the **Taittirīya Upaniṣad** says, “*annam brahmeti vyajānāt*. But matter is not the sole reality or the apex reality. Further, matter needs to be refined and transformed into that which is compatible with the spiritual. This is because matter is exclusive, divisive and competitive, whereas the spiritual is unifying, sharable and cooperative. Matter is confinement in

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space and time but spirit is expansion beyond space and time. The same existence can be material or spiritual, or more material or some spiritual. Narrowing of the self is material and widening of the self is spiritual. To be spiritual is not to renounce the body; it is only to renounce the sense of “I” and “mine”. It is self-opening, *parātmāsamatā*. This is what should be meant by culture and civilization. The point is that denial of matter is lopsided and harmful but equally lopsided and harmful is denial of spirit. But one wonders how far this would be acceptable to our vision blinded by the dazzling light of materiality and scientism. In this context, it may not be irrelevant to point out that the modern model of development has originated in the background of materialistic and competitive, rather mutually conflicting conception of human beings and the universe. In the mechanistic, reductionist paradigm, not only is the spiritual dimension of human and cosmic existence discarded, it has also been wrongly assumed that the goal of human endeavour should be to have mastery, victory, domination and control over Nature. In the zeal to conquer and subjugate Nature there has been abuse, exploitation and defilement of Nature. The arrogant human being thinks that Nature must be bent to the will, benefit and use of human kind. Nature is of great value to us. It is kind and benevolent. It is grand and gracious. It is rich and bountiful. It delights in serving us and does so dispassionately. But Nature is also very tender and delicate. It feels shy of exploitation and reacts. When it reacts it does so to make us rectify the wrongs we do to it. What Nature wants us is judicious use of its resources for progress and prosperity and not its uncared exploitation and destruction. It will provide us nourishment and peace only if we live in peace with it. Worship of Nature is the keynote of spiritual way of life.

The materialistic consumerist outlook has resulted in loss of harmony between human beings and Nature, disturbance of balance between human needs and natural resources, lack of coordination between material and spiritual dimensions of development, and finally in the overall deterioration in quality of life. It has given rise to disparity and deprivation, imbalance and inequalities. There is no denying the fact that due to science and technology there has been tremendous material progress but the fruits of all this progress have not only been inequitably distributed, but they have also been counter-productive.

In the context of material development, spiritual perspective is positive and

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helpful. It embraces the vital concerns of life i.e. *Kāma* and the means to secure them i.e., *artha*. It is *abhyudaya*, i.e., all-round development which sustains and which is sustainable, because it is regulated by *dharma* through which there is proper management of all assets available to us both in terms of human resources and material resources. Acquisition of material resources (*artha*) and their enjoyment (*kāma*) always requires proper management through dharma. This is because, as we said earlier, matter is exclusive, non-divisible and non-shareable. So it stands in need of regulation by dharma for its balanced share-ability. Indian culture has always denounced pursuit of *artha* and *kāma* without being regulated by dharma. The Indian response to **Cārvāka** ideology and its almost total rejection is a glaring example of this fact. The present day consumerism is an unabashed revival of the discarded **Cārvāka** ideology which has been doing immense damage to human psyche.

There is a wide spread misconception that spiritual experience is realizable only through scriptural statements (*śruti*) or divine revelations or miracles, or that it is anti-reason and cannot be expressed in human language, etc. Let it be made clear that almost all schools of thought in India have pointed out that *śruti* is only informative and not revelatory. Only through proper experience one has to realize spiritual unity. *Śruti* may provide the ground for its realization but cannot be of avail in the ultimate analysis.

Spiritual experience is not realizable through discursive reason also. It is supra-rational but this should not mean that it is anti-reason. How can any talk about unity of existence be anti-reason? Reason functions through analysis whereas spiritual experience is integral but why should analysis and synthesis be regarded as antagonistic or working at cross purposes? Of course, discursive reason can have no role in spiritual experience but this does not mean that we have to decry or deny the role of reason altogether. In the classical Indian literature there are statements in support of or against reason; but they are to be understood in their proper context.

Not with standing what is stated above, it must be stated that spiritual experience is extra-empirical in origin though it is very much applicable to the empirical realm. It is available to enlightened and realized souls only. In this sense it

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can be regarded as *ārṣa jñāna* or *prātibhijñāna*. In this sense again it can be regarded as *apauruṣeya*, meaning thereby that it is extra-empirical and not amendable to human senses and reason. Empirical knowledge is description of facts and this description can be true or false or doubtful. Its veracity is contingent upon empirical verification. Spiritual experience on the other hand is prescriptive. It is enlightenment about and realization of values. It cannot be evaluated in terms of empirical categories of true, false or doubtful as it does not describe facts. It can only be evaluated in terms of its desirability or otherwise or in terms of **ought to be practiced**. It is not *puruṣa tantra*. But its realization is dependent upon human will and endeavour i.e. *puruṣārtha*.

Spiritual experience is a value not in the empirical sense. It is a value *par-excellence*. All other values are comprehended under it but they do not exhaust it. One may acquire all other values but absence of spiritual value makes one feel imperfect. This is what Yājñavalkya meant when he averred that '*ātmanaḥ kāmaya sarvam priyam bhavati*.' This is the philosophy of universal love rooted in the premise of essential non-difference of all existences. It alone provides the stable and solid foundation to all other values. It alone is the intrinsic value, the *summum bonum*, all other values are only instrumental. It alone is universalisable as it is an end-value, an absolute value, which can be prescribed unconditionally without exception.

Having clarified the meaning of spirituality in Indian context, the relation between science and spirituality may briefly be touched. This has been an issue which has always remained controversial. It has been viewed differently depending on whether one takes a holistic view or a discursive and compartmentalized view of human existence, human knowledge and human value pursuits. Under the sway of rationality, more often than not, it has been said that the realms of science and spirituality are not only different but also incompatible. One is the realm of reason and the other is of faith or intuition. One is empirical and the other is trans-empirical and beyond reason. Under the blinding spell of tremendous achievements of science and technology some people claiming to be knowledgeable eulogize science and decry spirituality. On the other side, there has been a reaction to this attitude of scientism and some people have gone to the extreme of arguing against the

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evanescent worth and ultimate futility of all attainments of science and technology. The ill-effects of science and technology further provided a strong excuse for science-negativism.

A spiritual approach steers clear of these extreme and lop-sided positions. The *reductionist* approach of either sort does justice neither to the integral and *unitive* consciousness nor to concrete uniqueness of matter, both of which are equally foundational, significant and mutually complimentary. In a holistic view one need not conceive any rift or chasm between science and spirituality. The **Vedas** and the **Upaniṣads** are unequivocally explicit on this point. Isopaniṣad declares,

*Andhamtamaḥ praviśanti ye avidyāmupasate  
Tato bhūya iva tetamo ya u vidyāyām ratāḥ.*

*i.e., who adore the realm of empirical knowledge alone, they enter into the world of stark darkness. But who are engrossed only in spirituality, they enter into greater darkness. Of course Indian classics do not equate science and spirituality and clarify their differences. The Upaniṣads say,*

*Anyadāhur vidyayā anyadāhuravidyayā (Īśa, 10)  
(Spiritual knowledge and empirical knowledge are different)*

*Dve vidye veditavye parā caivāparā ca (Muṇḍaka 1.4)  
(There are two types of knowledge to be known, spiritual and temporal)*

*Dūramete viparīte viśūchī avidya yā ca vidyeti jñātā. (Kaṭha 1.2.4)  
(The spiritual and the temporal are mutually different or variant,  
opposite in nature and have different results.)*

Science and spirituality are quite different and one should not mix up the two. They differ in their subject matter, methodology, and results. Nevertheless they are interrelated and complimentary. There is no exclusive 'either-or' between the two. One cannot be complete without the other. The **Īsopaniṣad** emphatically declares,

*Vidyām cāvidyām ca yastad vedaobhayam saha*



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*Avidyāyā mṛtum tīrtva vidyayā'mṛtamṣnute.*

*(One who knows both the spiritual and temporal knowledge in their togetherness, crosses over the life of mortality by the temporal and experiences peace and plenitude by the spiritual)*

Science and spirituality have to join hands for *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa* of the universe. As the *Gītā* concludes, where we have Kṛṣṇa representing spirituality and Arjuna representing science and technology there is sure success in the attainment of prosperity and realization of peace.

### **Spirituality and science — partners for peace, plenitude and perfection**

Anthropology, Pre-history and history have all evinced the fact that religion representing spirituality and science expressing itself through technology have been handy to humankind, have been taken help of for good cause and have co-existed, sometimes with mutual reinforcement and sometimes with mutual hostility resulting in antagonism and acrimony, animosity and conflicts. The interrelation between the two has been problematic and troublesome right from the dawn of human awakening partly because of vested interests and partly because of ignorance of the nature of the two. Both are later developments in human life with a crude beginning and gradual sophistication. Both have served humans for betterment have but had adverse effects too. When properly used, they have been conducive to good and more peaceful living but have also been detrimental when misused. Both have inherent limitations and draw-backs which need to be improved upon by mutual supplementation as well as independently. Given sincerity and earnestness it is possible to do so. Then instead of being fighting parties they can be partners in peace, plenitude and perfection.

Strictly speaking, the problematic relation between spirituality and science has arisen only in the Western context. In ancient India there was no such phenomenon as religion in the Western sense, and neither *dharma* nor *ādhyātma* is religion since they stand for the entire view and way of life and not just a set of creeds and dogmas and a mode of devotion to and worship of the divine. Of course, now we do have religions under alien influences. But even now for us the problem of relation between science and religion is not acute. So in a sense we are debating a Western

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problem, an imported and borrowed problem, superimposed on us. But since we have owned it up, we have to discuss it.

In ancient India we practiced what may be called *anekāntavāda* both of the Vedic and the Jaina variety. (*Ekam sat viprāḥ bahudhāvadanti* and *Anantadharmātmakam sat.*) Science was not pursued in isolation from humanities, social sciences and spirituality. In fact there was no separation of this sort. Both partial and holistic approaches were adopted simultaneously. Distinctions are all right and must be entertained for classified treatment, but they are not to be mistaken for separation. There is no exclusive “either-or” about them, as stated earlier. All branches of knowledge and human pursuits have need, importance, value and utility. They are to be pursued both simultaneously and successively as per demands of the situation. All of them are useful, are means for betterment and have served humanity. So nothing is to be discarded, overrated or undervalued. A living being is a body-mind complex animated by consciousness. All the three are to be attended to, catered to simultaneously as well as in succession. Life and reality defy bloodless thought categories and logical quandaries about simultaneity and succession. There is no watertight compartmentalization among body, mind and consciousness. There is reciprocity and mutual openness. This is a hard fact given to us in experience. The outer and the inner are two inseparable facets of the same reality. Then why to close our eyes to this fact and be lopsided in our understanding?

Nothing can be a better account of the interrelation of science and spirituality/religion, taken in a broader context as *vyavahāra* and *paramārtha*, *sambūhuti* and *asambhūti*, *preyas* and *śreyas*, *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyas*, *aparāvidyā* (*avidyā*) and *parāvidyā* (*vidyā*) and such cognate pairs, than the one found in the Upaniṣadic thought. (Please see for details Author's Applied Philosophy Series: 1, Indian Council of Philosophical research, and Vedic Wisdom, Cultural Inheritance and Contemporary Life, Sandeep Prakashan, Delhi) To repeat, the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (II.1-5) points out the difference of subject matter, methodology and objects of the two. They fall apart in contents (*dūra*), employ variant methodology (*viparīta*) and have different results (*viśucī*). The Upaniṣad highlights their successive nature. Only one who has fulfilled the empirical and renounced the ephemeral really becomes a fit receptacle of the spiritual fullness. This account is in keeping with different stages of

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life. The Īśa Upaniṣad (verses 9-14), however, delineates upon their simultaneity also. It insists that empirical prosperity and spiritual realization are not to be practiced in their mutual isolation, in spite of the fact that they are different. Both must be taken help of, one for worldly prosperity and the other for spiritual well being. It says that those who practice one in exclusion of the other are in darkness and they are in greater darkness who pursue spirituality alone neglecting the empirical. The *Muṇḍaka*, the *Brhadāraṇyaka*, the *Taittirīya* and other Upaniṣads, as also Nāgārjuna, the great Buddhist thinker, have averred the same. The material is the arena for spiritual realization and, therefore, it has tremendous value and significance. *Artha* and *Kāma* are the *puruṣarthas* and science and technology are good means of their fulfillment. There is no inconsistency or contradiction in the views of Kaṭha and Īśa as they are to be understood contextually and this has been brought out clearly by subsequent theories and practices.

Science and religion are congenial means conducive to human and cosmic well being. Their distinct as well conjoint pursuits are helpful and needed. Exclusiveness as well as excessiveness are to be avoided and 'Middle Path' is to be followed. There should be no overzealous excitement, no overzealous advances and balance is to be maintained. Empirical and trans-empirical do differ, yet they are intimately related. For example, brain research is not the same as understanding consciousness and there should be no category mistake in treating the two. The physical and non-physical are not the same; the quantum and consciousness are not the same. So they are not to be mixed up, but at the same time their close and intimate relation and mutuality is also no to be overlooked. What is needed is insightful discrimination and synthesis.

Isolation of saints and scientists has been harmful to both and to society and the cosmos. Any conflict among them is due to ignorance, false views and obstinacy. The issues to be debated are how to correlate them, where to draw boundaries and limits. This requires mutual understanding, mutual appreciation, mutual acceptance and a consequent will to cooperate. This is possible through a new psyche, a change of mind set and a paradigm shift in values. Its precondition is that there should be no pre-conceived notions, no biases and prejudices, no superiority or inferiority complexes. Then only an open-minded dialogue is possible. Harmony and

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cooperation are always beneficial. It is hoped that joint enterprise along with separate ventures may open up new vistas, new horizons, new pathways, and new truths?

It is with these pre-suppositions the present paper delineates the nature, scope, results and interrelation of science and spirituality/ religion. It appreciates the basic difference between the two but also calls for their mutual understanding, harmony and mutual complementarities in the service of humanity and the cosmos.

The objective of science is to know the material or physical reality, the forces and phenomena of nature and the laws underlying them. It aims at transforming nature through technology. The findings and results of science are empirically testable; experimentally verifiable; practically observable directly or indirectly; and mathematically calculable. It has limited scope confined to matter. Because of its methodological limitations it cannot explore consciousness or spirit or trans-empirical reality. It can not explain our own self and has not fully explained matter either. It can not explain meaning and purpose of life. It may try to do so but it fails. Moreover, it can explain how certain events, actions and reactions, processes and occurrences take place but cannot explain why and perhaps for whom? Further it has not so far solved the ultimate riddles of life and cosmos or provided lasting solutions to human problems and miseries.

Science is to be used to manage and transform nature. Instead, some scientists ignorantly talk of exploiting and mastering nature. A human being can only help nature to help him. He has to learn lessons of ecology not from science but from nature itself and also from his real self. This is the real deep ecology. All else is shallow ecology which we talk about these days. (for details pl. see author's paper "Environmental Stewardship and Sustainable Development — An Indian Perspective). Another point to be noted is that science and scientific knowledge are value-neutral only in so far as they are not put to use. But the moment they are employed through technology, they become value-oriented. Then they stand in need of proper management since they can be conducive as well as detrimental to our well being.

Science has been of immense help to humanity. It has given invaluable information, though not complete, about physical world. With the help of sophisticated technology it has made life more comfortable. There have many boons

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of science. Science has undertaken great strides and made phenomenal achievements. There is tremendous progress in scientific knowledge and still there is constant growth in scientific knowledge. But we have to appreciate two things. There is no finality in scientific knowledge and there is always scope for uncertainty. Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty/indeterminacy is a testimony to this. This apart, the second law of Thermo-dynamics, which is the law of entropy, has tremendous implications for us to realize. The high-entropy civilization and harmful consumerism etc. are the evil consequences of value-negativism imposed on science and scientific enterprises. For this we have not to blame science but ourselves.

Among the multiple manifestations of human consciousness apart from science the place, the role and the significance of religion have been vital and far-reaching. Since times immemorial religion has exercised unmitigated influence on human modes of thinking and ways of living. It has attempted to explain the goal and the path for human and cosmic destiny. It has sought to provide meaning and purpose to life and existence. To the suffering human soul it has provided solace and succor, peace and bliss. With the rise and hold of science and technology it was felt that they would replace religion and serve the purpose for which religion is adhered to. But in spite of their phenomenal success they could not substitute religion. Whatever be its form, religion has come to stay in human life and is exercising a pervasive influence not only on our sacred and esoteric life but also on the secular and exoteric life.

Though religiosity may be alike in all human beings, religions are not one. There have been many forms and variety of religions. In its institutionalized aspect many superfluous elements have entered. Mostly there has been loss of spirituality and exhaustion of spirit. This apart, mythology, theology and philosophical speculations have affected religiosity. Rites and rituals, dogmas and creeds, myths and symbols etc. are all exterior aspects which are adventitious and which can be discarded. So we have to think seriously as to what constitutes religion/spirituality. Herein lies human wisdom and cosmic well being.

Real religion should be in the form of dharma, as this word connotes in the classical Indian literature. It has to perform triple roles of **dhāraka** (sustainer), **niyāmaka** (regulator) and **sādhaka** (instrument) for all beings and things in the cosmos. Ethics is the heart and spirituality is the core of religion. Only in this form it

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can serve its intended purpose. Then only it can spread the message of universal love, compassion, sympathy and harmony. Real religion should reconcile matter, mind and spirit. It should purify life and conduct. It should result in inner transformation and bring about mental equanimity.

It is an undeniable fact that religion has great force and it can bring about social change and development in the right direction and be a binding factor in social solidarity. But it is also an incontrovertible fact of history that it has been opium for the people and that widespread violence has been committed in the name of religion. Humanity has bled and suffered on account of misuse of religion. The malaise of fundamentalism, fanaticism and dogmatism has played havoc in social life. In stead of fostering unity, harmony and understanding it has played in the hands of vested interests in generating discord, conflicts and disorders.

The cleavage between science and religion has been harmful to both as also to humanity and the cosmos. There is dire need for mutual understanding and conciliation. In fact, great scientists like Max Plank, Schrödinger, Einstein and many others, and likewise many great religious leaders and thinkers have voiced this feeling. Reality is holistic, indivisible and integral. Reality is to be known and lived in the best possible way. For this both science and religion can cooperate and join hands to understand reality in a better and more perfect way. In spite of spread of science and religion, poverty, disease and suffering have increased. Their marriage may be helpful and conducive to universal well being.

There is a need to make religion scientific and also to spiritualize science. Religious tenets and practices that are insensitive to nature and all living beings cannot find acceptance for a critical mind. Likewise science and technology which are immune to cosmic well being cannot appeal to the same mind. Both need to be purified. Both have not to conflict and collide but to supplement and reinforce. From time to time wise people should remind humanity about this truth and requirement. This is the significance of the present seminar.