

## **Bridging Science and Spirituality – Signs of our Time<sup>1</sup>**

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Dear Friends,

Over the last century, mainstream materialistic science has developed at an explosive pace in the numerous disciplines it covers. Despite the fact it considers itself as purely materialistic and keeps faithful to its careful methodology based on observations by external instruments only, while avoiding to take any phenomenon for granted, the question should be raised whether it is as purely materialistic as it thinks itself to be. Is it not so that its advancement often depended and still depends upon one or other idea or insight, call it intuition. Such intuitive insight or idea regularly decides on the direction a project takes, or indicates the way to unblock a research which at first glance leads nowhere. Even more so, the correctness of a project or theory is regularly first experienced through feeling and intuition rather than through collected data and scientifically acceptable evidence. Until today, many scientists and especially scientific pioneers whose names are most of the time unknown by a greater audience for being condemned by the scientific establishment bear witness to that fact.

So, the number of illustrating examples on the intuitional element in science is unknown but let us take a quote from Edward Witten, an authority in the field of physics who, when talking about the M-theory, expresses it as follows:

*I just think too many nice things have happened in string theory for it to be all wrong. Humans do not understand it very well, but I just don't believe there is a big cosmic conspiracy that created this incredible thing that has nothing to do with the real world.*

There are not many measurements done in this statement which transpires also the special relationship science always has towards reality and its organized structures, a relationship based not only on objectivity but also on admiration and awe of realities which, at this stage, science can still only explore and describe rather than create. At the same time, one of man's most powerful drives is creation, especially scientist's. In fact, a scientist can get so caught into his research and creative drive, that it makes him lose sight altogether of other essential aspects of life such as ethics.

One of the more widely discussed examples of this losing-sight-of-ethics are the various fields of genetic engineering which go as far as the controversial and widely debated scientific researches into stem cells and therapeutic cloning and the many succeeded attempts of cloning life forms such as plants and animals, all kinds of experiments aiming at growing living tissue, etc.... Needless

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to say, man is struggling in each of these cases with more than one ethical question. And while the so-called transparent debate in the media goes on, God knows what kind of research is carried out this very moment in the greatest secrecy in laboratories wherever in the world. As is the case with so many discoveries and inventions, some will once, wholly or partially, become part of our lives in the decades to follow, as techniques, treatments, products or medication, not necessarily the most efficient or natural ones, as shown by the many examples of condemned scientists and researchers. At first instance, those methods and substances will be developed that are preferably produced or offered to the public by big relevant industries. It sounds like science fiction, but we know that in the course of time it will just be reality. Who would have guessed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the telephone was invented, that many of us would be hooked up to mobiles and iPhones from morning till night in the current time? And what about computer science and the internet and world wide web revolution: once started as a scientific project at a limited number of research institutes, it has become the tool which makes the world look like a village and boosts development in many domains to a dazzling pace.

The earlier mentioned genetic engineering is very likely to go into the same direction of exponential development. A hint for the distant future of this avenue of research can be found in the Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, more specifically Letter 23 b:

*[...] I may have the pleasure of demonstrating to you on your own writing table that life as life is not only transformable into other aspects or phases of the all-pervading Force, but that, it can be actually infused into an artificial man. Frankenstein is a myth only so far as he is the hero of a mystic tale; in nature -- he is a possibility; and the physicists and physicians of the last sub-race of the sixth Race will inoculate life and revive corpses, as they now inoculate small-pox, and often less comely diseases. Spirit, life and matter, are not natural principles existing independently of each other, but the effects of combinations produced by eternal motion in Space; and they [scientists] better learn it.*

*Mahatma Letters, Letter 23b, II, 6*

In all this, the development of the moral dimension, so it seems, is not following too closely that of material science and before we have reached the stage indicated in the Mahatma Letter by K.H., the earth will have seen more than one humanitarian or other debacle for sure. Why so? The question is answered in the quote: it is all the difference of considering principles independently from one another or seeing them as “effects of combinations”. But whether or not humanity sees the “effects of combinations”, in reality these effects will be there and by ignoring them, man forces himself into the position of a follower rather than in that of a conscious and wise agent of the elements. As long as we do not get the picture of the combinations right, or even accept that there is more to reality than just the outer, measurable layer, man will always be doomed to run behind the consequences of his actions or as Philip Harris has put it in his article *An Ethic Nightmare* published in the Quest Magazine:

*There is an urgent need for a well-informed global debate on artificial intelligence and artificially cultivated life forms. We must not justify embargoes on inquiry just because we are afraid. Neither must we forbid biological research when it has already yielded vast medical breakthroughs and social goods. No, freedom must be preserved from both atrophy and careless license. We must ratify ethical guidelines, formulated and enforced by an international body such as the United*

*Nations. Then we must live by those guidelines, lest we become gods whose very creations destroy us.*

Let us briefly consider another aspect of the technological advancement which currently gives such a boost to development of all kinds of equipment applied in all domains of daily life thanks to a variety of personal electronic devices. We have not even begun to imagine the actual and overall result of man's exposure to his own inventions in this field, and only time will tell and it will take many generations to get a clear view on the whole question. However great the advantages may seem, even in everyday life, we will only know much later on how this intensive exposure all worked out on the mental and emotional vehicles of individuals as well as on the collective mental and emotional vehicle of the globe.

The myriad of inventions turned into consumer products – each and every one the outcome and application of scientific research - combined to the power of a gargantuan industrial apparatus have made gadgets available to a greater number of individuals allowing those who can afford them to live – what we are made to believe – better lives. Undoubtedly, for a certain number of people in certain parts of the globe the degree of life comfort will be enhanced to some extent. The experience of living made by an average human being on earth has been forcefully reshaped by technology and cannot be compared to that of an average human being of let's say even 20 years ago. But at the same time the needs of Man for outer devices seem to have increased also, and with that his vulnerability, and the question is whether this is so good. Many information sources wish to make us believe that life has become easier or more comfortable, flashier or more interesting than before thanks to a multitude of personal devices and domotics, which make us all bathe, even drown, not only in emotional and mental impulses on the subtle level, but at the same time in a considerable number of electromagnetic fields in the gross physical matter.

What is the impact of all this interaction on our physical, emotional and mental vehicles? How will the next generations, who grow up with all these possibilities and will not know better, deal with information and how will their relationship with surrounding reality be influenced? What will be the impact on our brains, and what will be the impact on purely mental processes such as thinking, memory, concentrating, or even the higher faculties such as imagination, discernment, compassion and moral insight etc...

And yet, at the same time, and via other domains of research, the same materialistic science is discovering the way towards the inner side of Man in its own way and by its own means and methodology, especially when it studies e.g. forms of energy healing or all types and forms of energy and its interaction on man for therapeutic purposes. Thus, it is, intentionally or not, coming closer to the esoteric sciences and to the vast body of knowledge of the Timeless Wisdom... A breakthrough into the subtle domains of existence is likely to be located in these fields of research. To advanced meditation masters and yogis it probably may appear as some fine demonstrations of kicking open doors, but to bring together the Eastern and Western approaches towards matter, energy and reality, the conclusions of these paths of research will appear to be fundamental.

Thanks to Dr. Rupert Sheldrake most people know about morphogenetic fields throwing light on part of the energetic information continuum we are living in without really knowing. But many other steps are taken to try to build the bridges between Eastern and Western approaches and between Science and Spirituality. In a government funded five-year study at the Benson Henry Institute for Mind and Body Medicine of Massachusetts General Hospital, on the benefits of meditation, researcher and psychiatrist John Denninger found that mind-body techniques can actually switch on and off some genes related to stress and immunity. For this study, 210 participants with high levels of chronic stress were split into three groups, with one group practicing Kundalini yoga (chosen for its emphasis on meditation), the second just meditating, and the third listening to stress education audiobooks for 20 minutes daily, for two months. Researchers measured the impact on their genes and studied their neuroimaging for changes throughout the study interventions and in three follow-up sessions. In this research the biological effects of yoga and meditation were further unraveled. From earlier study it already appeared that the biological effects do not limit themselves to the brain but actually impact the whole body.

Luckily, this research is only one of many of its kind which are being conducted in many parts of the world. More and more funds are being provided, by governments and academic institutions, for this type of investigations. It is to hope that the advancements and results in this domain of research, and the further insights into the inner man it will entail, will be quick enough to counter the devastating consequences for the inner constitution of man caused a.o. by the epidemical abuse of all sorts of substances, legal or illegal for so called medical or entertainment purposes. Moreover, it is to be hoped that conclusions of these types of research will convince more and more hard core medical practitioners to consider meditation and yoga at least as a complimentary treatment in case of mental ailments, severe stress and depression. Imagine where we will stand with all this in 50 years' time from here?

These efforts of bridging Science and Spirituality, even if the bridging was unintentional, will be on more than one occasion helped by intuitive flashes experienced by the individual researchers themselves. These flashes will not be found in the articles, study papers and other official scientific publications as such, but rather in interviews, popularizing documentaries, diaries, blogs etc... No matter what may be the opinion of the scientific world, no matter even the opinion of the public at large, it will be the outcome of these researches and the responsible implementation of the solutions that they offer, and its balanced progress towards the core of Life itself, that will eventually count. If in the end it comes to answers, maybe even to gradual solutions, to the big questions and challenges of life on earth today, only then will the bridge between Science and Spirituality reveal its true value.