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The Union of Science and Spirituality | Utne Reader

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In order to embody the philosophy of elegant simplicity, we need to address the relationship between science and spirituality. Some people think that science and spirituality are polar opposites, but are they? Science is about things which can be measured, and spirituality is about things which cannot be measured. In life, both of these are integrated together. Look at our bodies. We can measure the weight, length, width, structure, and anatomy of the body. But we also have intelligence. How do we measure intelligence? We can do some IQ tests, but we can never really measure how much intelligence we have. Then we have feelings, like love for our

friends and family. Can we measure love? So spirituality is about what cannot be measured. We need to measure what can be measured, but we also need to accept the truth that there are dimensions of life which cannot be measured.

There are scientific theories such as complexity, chaos, Gaia and evolution which come close to spirituality. Quantum physics in particular bridges the gap between meaning and measurement. When you put meaning into quantity, quantity becomes quantum. At quantum level, all separations end. We are all related and connected at the energy level. Thus the meaning of existence is unmanifest and invisible and therefore spiritual. Some of my scientist friends believe that consciousness is close to quantum physics because at the level of quantum mechanics all manifestation is potential. The meaning of consciousness is also the same; there is an unmanifest potential before reality manifests. In the spiritual terminology, we call it consciousness, in scientific terminology, we call it quantum mechanics.

We can measure matter, but we cannot measure meaning. When I write an article, I can say it is eight hundred words and will fit on one page. I can count the number of words, and I can measure how much space it will take, but the meaning of the words and the quality of the writing cannot be measured. I can feel the meaning and sense it, but I cannot measure it. Words have a physical reality, but their meaning is metaphysical. The law has two aspects: the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. Everything has a physical reality and a metaphysical reality. We have the human body and the human spirit. We need matter and we need spirit. They form one unified reality. One cannot exist without the other. There is no separation or dualism between the physical and the metaphysical

or between the material and the spiritual.

Science gives us rational, logical, empirical, measurable, and replicable tools and technologies which we need to function well in life. Spirituality gives us love, compassion, generosity, and a sense of mutuality. We need these too.

Without the spiritual dimension of values, vision, ethics, and aesthetics, science can lead us astray. When there are no values to guide it, science ends up producing nuclear weapons. If spirituality guided the actions of scientists, then they would think ten times before inventing weapons of war and other tools of destruction. Why do we have global warming? Because scientists have been working in the interests of the commercial and industrial establishments, without the guidance of spiritual values; that is why their scientific and technological innovations have led to planetary crises such as climate change.