Science and spirituality – the two routes of enquiry

It is a common misconception that spiritual enquiry is "non-scientific" or irrational, while modern science by virtue of its methodology is purely rational. This article is again a rational thinking to help bridge science and spirituality and finally get answers about the mystery of universe and our life.

Both scientific and spiritual search use rational thinking but fundamentally differ in their route of search. The two principle routes for enquiry into the nature of existence are the outer and the inner. The outer search is pursued through the five senses: sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing, and is the basis of our scientific observation of the world we live in. The inner search falls into the realm of Self-enquiry and is spiritual by nature.

Scientific enquiry gets stranded at a point where scientific tools can no longer extend its realm of coverage both at the microscopic and telescopic range. Whereas in spiritual enquiry is unbounded because of its single "internal" tool, the human intellect. This human intellect "tool" can probe into unimaginable depths of both microcosmic and the macrocosmic levels, which no man made tools can penetrate. This is why spiritual quest becomes fruitful and completes the journey of the man's eternal quest, which scientific means fail to accomplish to the "fullest".

This is why the ancient cultures respected human "intellect" and considered it as God and power. Ancient cultures were all spiritual because they never lived their life of "belief system" but advocated inner exploration of the truth through intellect and experience. This is we find wisdom in ancient culture (wisdom is knowledge plus experience).

All Ancient cultures passed down their "discovery of the truth" to the next generation through rituals, because "Truth" cannot be verbalized. By performing the rituals the knowledge was imparted both at the subtle and gross level. To maintain the integrity of the rituals, mythology was used. We all have the notion that mythology means "not true". In the contrary, mythology imparts the knowledge of the mystery of universe and our life. We teach small children English alphabets with images. "A" for apple, "B" for ball, "C" for cat, "D" for dog. Without these images it is difficult for the kid to relate to the alphabets. Mythical images relate to higher truth which is otherwise difficult to explain in words.

It is like a teacher using a candle and ball in a classroom to demonstrate how day and night occur on earth. By showing the dark side of the ball opposite to the side of candle, the student easily understand how we experience night. Thus the teacher gives an experience to the students using the models and explains the reality which otherwise difficult to verbalize. This is how mythology works for us. Youth of modern society is struggling to grasp the facts of life because we have shunned away mythology which gives direction to our quest to know the mystery of life.

We would see in the next article how mythology has been misunderstood which has lead to great confusion in our personal lives.