

Science and Spirituality – *scio*

Scots have a strong connection with their land. The form of Christianity which developed in the Celtic lands regarded the Earth as sacred. Most Scots are devoted to the Highland hills and islands where the spiritual energy is particularly strong. I spent much of my younger days exploring these magical places. This feeling for Nature as a sacred unity has tempered my whole life. This was later tested as a science student when I was taught to split the world into bits.

My parents both had a strong faith. When I grew up (Edinburgh, in the 1930s & '40s) this was expressed usually by going to church, teaching Sunday school and perhaps being a church 'elder'. As a college student I tried the evangelical Christian path, but was later attracted to a more personal path. In the meantime I studied the esoteric traditions, spending some years in Gurdjieff/ Ouspensky groups and studying Sufism and astrology, and learning how to dowse earth energies — then seeking more mystical experiences; eventually finding my more appropriate home with the transpersonal psychological view of the human potential.

Being of an experimental and curious nature, I often wondered about the purpose of our existence. My mother's gift was an explicit belief in the spiritual nature of life, and I soon developed a wish to try to reconcile spiritual yearning with knowledge of the world — or scientific enquiry. This was to be the focus of my book publishing career and of the books I have written. I learned much from many of the authors I published —these were consciousness-expanding years!

1979 was a seminal year for me. James Lovelock's first book was published on his Gaia theory, which postulates that the **biosphere** is a self-regulating entity with the capacity to keep our planet healthy by controlling its own chemical and physical environment. He proposed that the living and non-living parts of Earth form a **complex interacting system** that can be thought of as a single **organism**. Also in that year I discovered Viktor Schauberger's science of Nature which has inspired my journey into holistic science. My difficulty in reconciling spiritual experience with a scientific worldview was resolved by these two sources of inspiration.

Schauberger's startling insights about the primary role of water in the stimulation, maintenance and evolution of life, and publishing five books about his research, gave me nearly 30 years of familiarity with his worldview. Then, personal experiences I had of water as a medium of consciousness and of communication, prompted me to write *The Story of Water* as the epitome of holism.

Theoretical science can be sterile, and belief without experience is unreliable. Carl Jung, when asked if he believed in God, replied, "I don't believe — I know". ('*Scio*' means 'I know'). Knowledge (science) can be a useful tool to help us to learn from experience. Quantum physics, with its discovery of an endless field of energy and of the holistic interconnectedness of all life, has introduced a spiritual dimension into science. Significantly, a number of quantum physicists have discovered links between modern quantum theory and the fundamental beliefs of Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism.

Religion has always played a significant role in human society. However, a change is taking place today as more people want to have a personal connection with the sacred, without rituals and doctrines getting in the way — religion, giving way to spirituality, as it has in my own life. Perhaps this is why church attendance has fallen, although they still fill at Christmas, Easter and times of national crisis. Many, of whom I am one, also

feel that our religion still clings to an anthropomorphic idea of God, a concept which has helped fuel many wars and conflicts.

You may have a scientific education and yet espouse the idea of a transcendental presence behind the intricate and beautiful laws which seem to govern evolution and the inter-connections between life-forms. I prefer to limit the term 'religion' to the institutional and doctrinal structures and belief practices — and use 'spirituality' to describe our personal experience of the sacred.

Indigenous societies also believed very much in the gods, but in a less anthropomorphic way than we do. Their deities were usually associated with natural phenomena and with the physical environment. Their focus was more spiritual than religious.

In *The Story of Water* you will find this observation of the spiritual in Nature expressed in discerning natural laws (e.g. see [Water's Lessons](#)) of life and evolution. The Earth is our home, our 'mother', while Nature I see as imbued with the energy of 'The-All-That-Is', or God. Our inspiration originates in the Cosmos, transmitted to us, I propose, through the quantum (*yang*) and water (*yin*) mediums, while we are subject to natural laws.

Over the years, being drawn to the mystical, I have developed a personal focus that in the language of transpersonal psychology is called 'the higher self'. I have a very real sense of my ordinary self being over-lighted by another part of my being which is detached from the cares and confusion of ordinary life, an aspect which seems somehow to be connected with a universal spiritual reality more in touch with the ineffable.

I have a personal relationship with my 'higher self'. It became clear about 40 years ago when it persuaded me (against my better judgement) to launch the Turnstone Press in London. That experience was singular and dramatic. My sense is of an avuncular presence to whom I can sometimes turn as a touchstone of objectivity and wisdom, or who might be the source of my intuitive thoughts and insight; but whom I recognise as one facet of the total 'me', which is part of the greater reality or cosmic consciousness — or God.

The Over-Soul or Higher Self has enormous depth, ranging from being the source of intuitive insights and sixth sense — to the Matrix Higher Self that is connected to, or part of, the Universal Intelligence. Mellen-Thomas describes his dialogue with 'the Light' in his inspiring recall of a remarkable near-death experience (see www.mellen-thomas.com) which I commend to you.

This kind of inner spiritual relationship is very personal, and many people have their own version of it (see [The Spiritual Path](#)). It certainly brings a sense of meaning and purpose to life, and melts away the fear of dying.

Most spiritual traditions speak of the Divine spark in every person, tree and rock. Many of us feel there is a part of us that is sacred. We might all benefit from cultivating this gift.