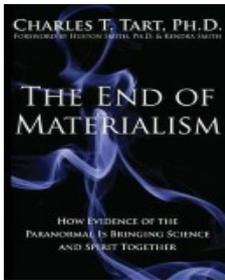


Conscious spirituality in search of truth...



CHARLES T TART: THE END OF MATERIALISM-SPIRITUALITY

When researching or following spiritually-related pathways people often find conflict with trying to discern differences between science, scientism, religion, cultural belief and materialism. Professor Charles T Tart has attempted to identify these conflicts in his brilliant book “End of Materialism.” Tarts background experience includes more than four decades of academia, parapsychology research, science, and transpersonal psychology.

Tart predominantly believes there are consistent patterns of interconnectedness existing between science, spirituality, and consciousness. During the 1970s whilst exploring extrasensory perception, ESP, telepathy and related parapsychology literature Tart's publications were rewarding reading. In 2018 whilst researching consciousness-spirituality fields I discovered Tart's book “End of Materialism” (published in 2018). An extract from this inspiring book highlighting an interconnecting link between science, spirituality and materialism follow.

—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020

CHARLES T TART: “THE END OF MATERIALISM” - BACKGROUND

‘Modern science has taught us much about the world, but will science ever make spirituality obsolete? Today, the need for spiritual explanations remains strong-- **some 20 percent of the population describes themselves as “spiritual, but not religious,”** that is, unaffiliated with a specific church or synagogue but engaged in spiritual seeking. A 2006 survey found that 92 percent of Americans believe in a personal God--that is, a god with a distinct set of character traits.

The classic materialist view is of a universe of separate objects that occasionally and meaninglessly affect each other through material forces. These objects are considered to be dead matter. But are things more linked than we normally imagine? This book presents an elegant argument that the twenty-first century needs a much broader perspective on the nature of reality than traditional science is capable of delivering.

In *The End of Materialism*, Tart presents research that supports the existence of paranormal phenomena and shows readers how science and spirituality can be understood as two interconnected halves of a whole instead of as forces in opposition. The book presents Tart's most intriguing findings in his fifty-year career investigating paranormal phenomena in scientific experiments at prestigious institutions including Stanford University and the University of California, Davis.



This book offers evidence for the existence of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, psychokinesis, and psychic healing, and explains other phenomena such as out-of-body experiences and near-death experiences. This book is ideal for scientifically minded individuals curious about life's spiritual side as well as spiritually inclined people seeking to back up their beliefs with legitimate scientific evidence.'

[Cited: Book Depository introduction].

CHARLES T TART: "HOW DO WE KNOW THE SPIRITUAL IS REAL?"

[PP:33-37]

'So hear you are, a human being with a yearning for something higher than simple material gratification, something "spiritual." Yet modern science, the most powerful knowledge-refinement system in history, which has led to enormous power over the physical world, seems to tell you in no uncertain terms that you yearn for nothing nothing but fantasy— superstitious, outmoded nonsense that will make you less fit to live in the "real" world.

This isn't a very comfortable position to be in. **Something in us yearns for this higher thing we vaguely call "spirit," but we don't want to feel stupid or crazy.** How can we clarify, expand, and refine our knowledge (that's basically what science is about) in a way that allows us to see how much of a reality basis we have for our spirituality, instead of being stuck in this dilemma?

I saw two common responses to this science-versus-spirit conflict as I was growing up. People had spiritual impulses to various degrees, usually expressed through the religions they were brought up in as children. As young children, they generally accepted their religions with few questions, but then conflict would begin as they began thinking for themselves and came into contact with the scientific, materialistic view of the world that invalidated their beliefs.

Such conflict is necessary and healthy in many ways, of course, because we need to start thinking for ourselves as we grow up. But it can be certainly be distressing. One major "solution" to the uncomfortable feeling of conflict was to "convert" to materialism. The reaction was kind of like this: 'Right, my religion is is an old superstition; science has proven that there's nothing in the world but matter and physical energy, so I'd better try to live as as happy a life as possible within that world—and not think about death or such things as God or purpose or meaning.'



The second major “solution” I observed was one of psychological isolation or compartmentalization. Religion and spirituality were thought about at and perhaps acted upon for a limited time, usually on one special day of the week, and the rest of life was spent in pursuing various material goals, but the two aspects of life were otherwise kept as mentally isolated as possible from one another.

If you don’t consciously see that you have competing, clashing views of something, it won’t feel as if you have a conflict. **But, at a deeper, psychological level, your psyche is not whole when you do this; the conflict will exact a price from you on less-conscious levels.**

I was lucky when I went through this conflict in my teens. I discovered the literature of scientific *parapsychology* (as it was then and is still called) and the older literature of its originating field, *psychical research* (a term still in use and with wider implications, but not as widely known in the United States as parapsychology), and found that I wasn’t the first to experience this kind of conflict between science and religion.

Many intelligent people in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had struggle with this issue as science became more powerful and religion typically gave way to science. Early presidents of the London-based Society for Psychical Research included such luminaries as philosopher Henry Sidgwick , philosopher and later Prime Minister of Great Britain Arthur Balfour, psychologist William James, physicist Sir William Crookes, philosopher F.W.H. Myers, physicist Sir Oliver Lodge, physicist Sir William Barrett, physiologist Charles Richet, mathematician Eleanor Sedgewick, philosopher Henri Bergson, psychologist William McDougall, psychologist Robert Thouless, and psychologist Gardner Murphy.

Science is undoubtedly right about so many things, they reasoned. Religion is indeed full of factually false ideas about the physical world and some beliefs that are psychologically unhealthy, if not downright crazy. Yet our ethics and morality, our highest values, come from religion. Won’t we be on the same level as the savage beasts, “red in tooth and claw,” if we completely reject religion?

And is *everything* in religion factually false? This was a real worry: there has never been a lack of historical and contemporary evidence of just how selfish and bestial people can be, and science has all to often been applied to vastly increase human suffering, as well as to alleviate it.



Materialistic science gives no transcendent values at all to live by, yet it was replacing religion, the major source of values—not that formal religion guarantees that people will be kinder and more moral, of course; many horrors have been committed in the name of religion, but it at least usually provides a framework favoring the moral life.

I was lucky to have read writings on psychical research while I myself was in conflict, because some of these early researchers had a radical idea, which was just what I needed. Scientific *method*—as separated from the particular theories and findings accumulating from applications of the method at any particular time —had been used very successfully in the physical sciences to increase our knowledge of the world and our consequent ability to improve it.

It had enabled us to reject many historical ideas about the world that were shown to be useless or false, and replace them with understandings that worked much better. The applications of the germ theory of disease, for instance, resulted in much better control over deadly epidemics than ringing bells to frighten away evil spirits. Could the same thing be done with religion?

By applying essential scientific method method to the phenomena of religion and spirituality, could we separate the wheat from the chaff—any real and important essence of spirituality from the superstitions and distortions of the ages? Could we thus create a refined spirituality and religion that would give us a basis for human values, while leaving the superstitions, outmoded ideas, and psychopathologies behind?

By the time I was reading material on psychical research and parapsychology, in the early 1950's some of this application of essential scientific method, without a philosophical or political commitment that all knowledge *must* be reduced to only material knowledge, had been done, and a certain reality to spiritual phenomena had been, to my then—teenage mind(and my current, more mature, adult mind), clearly demonstrated.

By “demonstrated,” I mean that by the formal, rational rules of science, which have worked so well in understanding the physical world, *human beings occasionally have experiences and show certain behaviors that cannot be reduced to materialistic explanations and that look like fundamental aspects of a spiritual nature.*’



Suggested resources:

The End of Materialism, Charles T Tart, PhD, 2009, New Harbringer Publications, USA.

View content via Book Depository: [Copies not available 2020].

<https://www.bookdepository.com/End-Materialism-Charles-T-Tart/9781572246454?ref=grid-view&qid=1579141128102&sr=1-1>

<https://www.amazon.com/End-Materialism-Evidence-Paranormal-Bringing/dp/1572246456?encoding=UTF8&tag=psychologicalpro>

Professor Charles T Tart

<http://www.issc-taste.org/index.shtml>

