

BECOMING WHOLE

Mental Health and Life from
a Spiritual Perspective

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Becoming Whole: Mental Health and Life from a Spiritual Perspective

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THE DAY SCIENCE
BEGINS TO STUDY
NON-PHYSICAL
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MAKE MORE PROGRESS
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IN ALL THE PREVIOUS
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EXISTENCE.

IF YOU WANT TO FIND
THE SECRETS OF THE
UNIVERSE, THINK IN
TERMS OF ENERGY,
FREQUENCY AND
VIBRATION.

– NIKOLA TESLA

INTRODUCTION

I'd been meditating for half an hour or so. My mind was quiet, my eyes closed. Suddenly, a vivid mandala pattern appeared out of nowhere. It was shocking, because I don't usually see anything with my eyes shut. Just black. I have aphantasia. And yet, there it was.

This experience opened a new chapter for me. After some research, my heavily scientific worldview started to shift. I learned that Swiss psychologist Carl Jung was fascinated with mandalas, viewing them as symbols for psychological wholeness. I discovered that people taking psychedelics such as psilocybin, LSD, and DMT often report seeing mandala-like patterns. They also appear cross-culturally: in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islamic art, Christian rose windows, and Native American sand paintings.

Why do these patterns emerge in meditation, psychedelics, and across cultures? Do they relate to a deeper fabric of reality?

I've always been drawn towards mystery. Compelled to find the hidden threads that reveal the underlying patterns. And what deeper mystery than: what is the nature of reality?

We live in a science-dominated society where such metaphysical enquiries are often ridiculed. The dominant criticism is always that these ideas are "unprovable," "unfalsifiable," or "not testable" using the scientific method. Because they can't be verified through controlled experiment, they're dismissed as irrelevant. But here's the irony: this belief itself is not scientifically provable. You can't use the scientific method to prove that the scientific method is the ultimate path to truth. It is, in fact, a metaphysical assumption – one that requires faith.

Science excels at studying the observable, measurable, repeatable. But it struggles with consciousness and subjective experience. Spiritual frameworks attempt to make sense of these essential aspects of life, and countless people report them to be life changing.

"IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE EVERYTHING SCIENTIFICALLY, BUT IT WOULD MAKE NO SENSE; IT WOULD BE WITHOUT MEANING, AS IF YOU DESCRIBED A BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY AS A VARIATION OF WAVE PRESSURE." – ALBERT EINSTEIN

There's a quiet but pervasive egotism embedded in our scientific culture – a presumption that our current civilization and species represent the pinnacle of intelligence. We're quick to dismiss the possibility that ancient cultures, non-human species, or even unseen dimensions of intelligence could rival our own. This anthropocentric arrogance limits our view of reality.

Unlike many modern scientists, ancient Indian sages took the study of spiritual experience extremely seriously, even distinguishing between "higher" and "lower" forms of knowledge. What we call science would've been categorised as lower knowledge, *apara vidya*.

"Lower" in this context doesn't mean inferior in value. It means limited in scope. *Apara vidya* includes grammar, logic, medicine – things that help us navigate the external world. It's seen as useful and necessary, but unable to answer deeper questions like:

- What's the nature of self?
- What is the source of awareness?
- What lies beyond death?



For this, we need *para vidya* – the study of internal experiences through introspection, meditation, and spiritual insight. The Indian sages considered this “higher” because it’s what gives rise to *self-realization*, which they consider the ultimate aim of life. Self-realization is the experiential recognition that your identity is not limited to your personality, thoughts, or roles.

The sages taught that without this knowledge of the self, all other forms of knowledge remain incomplete, because they don’t address the consciousness that perceives that knowledge. Thus, *Brahmavidya* – the inquiry into the self and ultimate reality – was regarded as the “supreme science”.

For around 98.5% of human history, we’ve operated from a spiritual framework, understanding ourselves as part of a larger, divine order.

ERA	TIME SPAN	% OF HUMAN HISTORY
Spiritual Era	~100,000 BCE – ~1500 CE (~98,500 years ago)	98.5%
Rise of Science	~1500 CE – ~1900 CE (~400 years ago)	0.4%
Quantum Physics Era	~1900 CE – Present (~120 years ago)	0.12%

Note: Percentages are rounded and based on a simplified 100,000-year timescale. Overlaps/transitional phases are not accounted for.

Around 400 years ago – representing just a *tiny speck* of human history – a new idea of reality began to emerge. We moved from a cosmos of purpose and participation to one of randomness and detachment.

And now the boundaries are blurring again.

Quantum physics and emerging theories are hinting at a more interconnected, intelligent universe. Nikola Tesla said, “The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence.” In other words: it’s time to shift our focus beyond materialism, the assumption that reality is purely physical. And it’s happening.

Materialist views of reality are breaking down. *The Post-Materialist Manifesto*, advocating for a broader, consciousness-inclusive framework, is currently signed by over 500 scientists and scholars from more than 200 universities worldwide. It’s calling for a science that recognises consciousness as a fundamental aspect of reality.

Materialism once claimed that the world is made of solid, physical stuff. Tiny, hard particles bumping into each other. But the quantum physics era is telling a very different story:

- “Matter” isn’t really made of stuff.
- On the smallest scales of reality, atoms consist almost entirely of empty space.
- What we call “particles” behave more like clouds of probability than solid objects.

The more science investigates the building blocks of reality, the more the idea of solid matter disappears. And so, some physicists are now proposing that the universe is fundamentally

informational, not material.

It can be noted that scientific “truth” has shifted constantly throughout human history. Each era believed it had a firm grasp on reality until a new framework emerged.

For example:

- **Geocentrism** once claimed the Earth was the unmoving centre of the universe. This was replaced by heliocentrism, the view that Earth orbits the Sun.
- **The Miasma Theory** of disease argued that illness was caused by “bad air” until germ theory showed that bacteria and viruses cause infection.
- **The Newtonian Deterministic Model** described the universe as a machine: perfectly predictable if initial conditions are known. Quantum mechanics now challenges this.

This reminds us that scientific models are not absolute truths. They shift as humanity evolves. While the materialist model has resulted in remarkable advances in medicine and technology, it's also contributed to the greatest sense of disconnection humanity has ever known.

An increasing number of people are beginning to recognise that the way society is structured does not resonate with who we are as human beings. The breakdown of our relationship with nature and meaning is a foundational cause of both the mental health epidemic and ecological collapse.

One of the earliest and most influential critiques of this disconnection dates back to 1927 in René Guénon's book *The Crisis of the Modern World*. Guénon was a French metaphysicist who saw a deep spiritual crisis at the heart of modern life.

For Guénon, ancient civilizations were grounded in metaphysical truths that connected people to something higher. Every part of life, from politics to education, was shaped by that spiritual foundation. In the modern West, that foundation has now crumbled. As Nietzsche famously declared: “God is dead”.

Guénon notes how spiritual wisdom has been replaced by the “*reign of quantity*” – an obsession with data, measurement, material success. As a result, we've lost touch with *quality* – meaning, soul, spirit. We reduce people to what they can produce and knowledge to what can be measured. Guénon notes this is the exact opposite of progress.

I've worked in the mental health field for the past decade, and I've always had this nagging feeling that something is fundamentally missing in our approach to treating distress. I think I've discovered that puzzle piece, and I'll describe it in this book. It's the practice of nurturing our spirituality, which I define as:

THE ONGOING PROCESS OF ALIGNING OUR THOUGHTS, INTENTIONS, AND BEHAVIOUR WITH HIGHER QUALITIES, WHILE CULTIVATING A SENSE OF CONNECTION TO AND TRUST IN SOMETHING LARGER THAN ONESELF.

Drawing from ancient wisdom, psychology, neuroscience, modern physics, and mystical and anomalous phenomena, I explore perspectives that point toward a spiritual worldview – seeing the universe not as a random, impersonal system, but a benevolent, structured intelligence.

When evaluating this post-materialistic framework, we need to consider a different set of criteria, ones that go beyond physical proof. We must ask ourselves:

- *Does it offer a more coherent explanation of phenomena than materialism?*

- *What makes sense intuitively, according to our lived experience, and based on all the information we have available?*
- *How helpful is the framework for us and collective society?*

In other words, it's not about fitting it into the mold of traditional science. It's about recognising that some truths require a broader lens than empirical observation can provide.

Here's a breakdown of this tool:

- **Part one.** A crash course in various ancient spiritual teachings: Vedic thought and Vedanta, Taoism, Buddhism, Hermeticism, Sufism, Paganism, Kabbalah, Christian mysticism, and Gnosticism.
- **Part two.** Key themes and insights distilled from these traditions.
- **Part three.** Modern spiritual teachings and how they differ from ancient wisdom.
- **Part four.** Mystical and anomalous phenomena that align with spiritual teachings.
- **Part five.** Delves deeper into bridging spirituality and science.
- **Part six.** Explores the metaphysical question: who created reality and why.
- **Part seven.** The transformative value of seeing your life as a hero's journey.
- **Part eight.** Summarises key insights and implications.

You'll discover multiple striking parallels between science of spirituality and how they support the validity of spiritual perspectives. Biblical scriptures will also be explored alongside ancient spiritual teachings.

We'll cover a lot of ground. I always aim to be concise yet comprehensive in my writing, so I encourage you to read and reflect rather than rush through. To aid this process, there are several self-reflection exercises along the way. These are pauses for you to absorb the teachings and integrate them into your own spiritual growth.

By the time you've finished, I hope to have helped you:

- Deepen your understanding of ancient wisdom and how it relates to modern spirituality.
- Reduce mental distress by deepening your sense of connection to a larger reality.
- Cultivate a stronger sense of meaning and purpose by reframing challenges as part of your hero's journey.

Are you ready?

Let's begin.

