

Science and Religion

Part 1

Complementary, in Harmony

Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse – Science 1

“Unlocking the doors of sciences”

Unveiled and unconcealed, this Wronged One hath, at all times, proclaimed before the face of all the peoples of the world that which will serve as the key for unlocking the doors of sciences, of arts, of knowledge, of well-being, of prosperity and wealth.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), p. 96)

Knowledge

Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone. The knowledge of such sciences, however, should be acquired as can profit the peoples of the earth, and not those which begin with words and end with words. Great indeed is the claim of scientists and craftsmen on the peoples of the world.... In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him.

(Bahá'u'lláh, [Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas](#) (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), pp. 51-52)

Science

Science is the first emanation from God toward man. All created beings embody the potentiality of material perfection, but the power of intellectual investigation and scientific acquisition is a higher virtue specialized to man alone. Other beings and organisms are deprived of this potentiality and attainment. God has created or deposited this love of reality in man.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), p. 67)

Science

The development and progress of a nation is according to the measure and degree of that nation's scientific attainments. Through this means its greatness is continually increased, and day by day the welfare and prosperity of its people are assured.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), p. 67)

Scientific
laboratory



Science

All the sciences, branches of learning, arts, inventions, institutions, undertakings, and discoveries have resulted from the comprehension of the rational soul. These were once impenetrable secrets, hidden mysteries, and unknown realities, and the rational soul gradually discovered them and brought them out of the invisible plane into the realm of the visible. This is the greatest power of comprehension in the world of nature, and the uttermost limit of its flight is to comprehend the realities, signs, and properties of contingent things.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, pp. 250–251)

Science and Religion

... the religion of God is the promoter of truth, the establisher of science and learning, the supporter of knowledge, the civilizer of the human race, the discoverer of the secrets of existence, and the enlightener of the horizons of the world. How then could it oppose knowledge? God forbid! On the contrary, in the sight of God knowledge is the greatest human virtue and the noblest human perfection. To oppose knowledge is pure ignorance, and he who abhors knowledge and learning is not a human being but a mindless animal.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, pp. 154–155)

Science and Religion

For knowledge is light, life, felicity, perfection, and beauty, and causes the soul to draw nigh to the divine threshold. It is the honour and glory of the human realm and the greatest of God's bounties. Knowledge is identical to guidance, and ignorance is the essence of error.

Happy are those who spend their days in the pursuit of knowledge, in the discovery of the secrets of the universe, and in the meticulous investigation of truth!

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Some Answered Questions](#), pp. 154–155)

Agreement of Religion and Science

God has endowed man with intelligence and reason whereby he is required to determine the verity of questions and propositions. If religious beliefs and opinions are found contrary to the standards of science, they are mere superstitions and imaginations; for the antithesis of knowledge is ignorance, and the child of ignorance is superstition.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), §63, p.181)

Agreement of Religion and Science

Unquestionably there must be agreement between true religion and science. If a question be found contrary to reason, faith and belief in it are impossible, and there is no outcome but wavering and vacillation.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), §63, p.181)

Science

Among the Bahá'í teachings are those concerning the importance of science. “Great indeed is the claim of scientists ... on the peoples of the world,” Bahá'u'lláh observed. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote that the “sciences of today are bridges to reality” and repeatedly emphasized that “religion must be in conformity with science and reason.”

Science

Significantly, on an occasion when a scientific question was asked of Shoghi Effendi, he responded in a letter written on his behalf that “we are a religion and not qualified to pass on scientific matters.”

And in reply to scientific issues raised on a number of occasions, he consistently advised Bahá'ís that such matters would need to be investigated by scientists.

(Universal House of Justice, letter of 29 November 2017 https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/20171129_001)

Science

...man through the exercise of his scientific, intellectual power ... can modify, change and control nature according to his own wishes and uses. Science, so to speak, is the breaker of the laws of nature.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, p. 30)

Science

Consider, for example, that man according to natural law should dwell upon the surface of the earth. By overcoming this law and restriction, however, he sails in ships over the ocean, mounts to the zenith in airplanes and sinks to the depths of the sea in submarines. This is against the fiat of nature and a violation of her sovereignty and dominion.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, p. 30)

Research
submarine



Science

Nature's laws and methods, the hidden secrets and mysteries of the universe, human inventions and discoveries, all our scientific acquisitions should naturally remain concealed and unknown, but man through his intellectual acumen searches them out of the plane of the invisible, draws them into the plane of the visible, exposes and explains them.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, p. 30)

Science

For instance, one of the mysteries of nature is electricity. According to nature this force, this energy, should remain latent and hidden, but man scientifically breaks through the very laws of nature, arrests it and even imprisons it for his use.

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, p. 30)

Science

In brief, man through the possession of this ideal endowment of scientific investigation is the most noble product of creation, the governor of nature....

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, p. 30)

Science

This endowment is the most praiseworthy power of man, for through its employment and exercise the betterment of the human race is accomplished, the development of the virtues of mankind is made possible and the spirit and mysteries of God become manifest....

(The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, p. 31)

Science

...any agency whatever, though it be the instrument of mankind's greatest good, is capable of misuse. Its proper use or abuse depends on the varying degrees of enlightenment, capacity, faith, honesty, devotion and high-mindedness of the leaders of public opinion.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Secret of Divine Civilization](#), 2nd ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1983), p. 16)

Science and Religion

No matter how far the material world advances, it cannot establish the happiness of mankind. Only when material and spiritual civilization are linked and coordinated will happiness be assured. Then material civilization will not contribute its energies to the forces of evil in destroying the oneness of humanity, for in material civilization good and evil advance together and maintain the same pace.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), p.151-152; Social Action §72)

Studies
of water
pollution
in
Papua
New
Guinea



Science and Religion

Scientific knowledge is the highest attainment upon the human plane, for science is the discoverer of realities. It is of two kinds: material and spiritual. Material science is the investigation of natural phenomena; divine science is the discovery and realization of spiritual verities. The world of humanity must acquire both.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), p.195-196; [Social Action §73](#))

Science and Religion

For man two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are essential. Therefore, no matter how much material civilization advances, it cannot attain to perfection except through the uplift of spiritual civilization.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), p.16; [Social Action §71](#))

Science and Religion

We hope that the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful will, in accordance with the heavenly Teachings, serve the oneness of the world of humanity, regard religion as the basis of love and fellowship amongst the people, strive to harmonize religion and science, become a treasury of riches for the poor and a shelter and asylum for the fugitive, bring joy and radiance to the destitute, and aid the needy through the strengthening grace of the All-Merciful.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, from a Tablet—translated from the Persian, Social Action §69)