

# Science and Religion

## Part 2

Science for Everyone

Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse - Science2

# Science and Religion

Acceptance of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh carries with it the commitment to strive for individual spiritual maturity and to participate in collective efforts to build a thriving society and contribute to the common weal. Science and religion are the two inseparable, reciprocal systems of knowledge impelling the advancement of civilization.

(The Universal House of Justice, from a message dated 17 June 2011 to the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith, Compilation on Social Action §61)

# Science and Religion

In the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “*The progress of the world of humanity dependeth upon knowledge, and its decline is due to ignorance. When the human race gaineth in knowledge it becometh heavenly, and when it acquireth learning it taketh on lordly attributes.*”

(The Universal House of Justice, from a message dated 17 June 2011 to the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith, Compilation on Social Action §61)

# Science and Religion

To seek to acquire knowledge and learning and to study useful sciences and crafts are among the fundamental beliefs of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. Therefore, ...engage in constructive collaboration with other proponents of peace and reconciliation to build a progressive and orderly society committed to the promotion of knowledge and social justice.

(The Universal House of Justice, from a message dated 17 June 2011 to the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith, Compilation on Social Action §61)

# Science

*The greatest attainment in the world of humanity has ever been scientific in nature. It is the discovery of the realities of things.*

*The highest praise is due to men who devote their energies to science, and the noblest center is a center wherein the sciences and arts are taught and studied. Science ever tends to the illumination of the world of humanity.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), Talk at Leland Stanford Junior University, 8 October 1912)*



*The elements and lower organisms are synchronized in the great plan of life. Shall man, infinitely above them in degree, be antagonistic and a destroyer of that perfection?*

('Abdu'l-Bahá, talk at Leland Stanford Junior University, Palo Alto, California, 8 October 1912. Promulgation of Universal Peace. Wilmette, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982. p. 350)

# Science

*God has created man lofty and noble, made him a dominant factor in creation. He has specialized man with supreme bestowals, conferred upon him mind, perception, memory, abstraction and the powers of the senses. These gifts of God to man were intended to make him the manifestation of divine virtues, a radiant light in the world of creation, a source of life and the agency of constructiveness in the infinite fields of existence.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), Talk at Leland Stanford Junior University, 8 October 1912)*

# Access to Knowledge

The development of a global society calls for levels of capacity far beyond anything the human race has so far known. This will require a great expansion in access to knowledge for both individuals and social organisations. Universal education will be an essential contributor to this process of capacity building, but the effort will require the reorganisation of human affairs so that both individuals and groups in every part of society can acquire knowledge and apply it to human affairs.

*(Bahá'í International Community, [The Prosperity of Humankind](#), 1995, §35)*



# Science and Religion

Throughout recorded history, human consciousness has depended upon two basic knowledge systems through which its potentialities have progressively been expressed: science and religion. Through these two complementary systems, our experience has been organized, our environment interpreted, our latent powers explored, and our moral and intellectual life disciplined....  
...the effectiveness of this dual structure has been greatest during those periods when, each in its own sphere, religion and science were able to work in concert.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §36)

# Science

Science is almost universally respected today. ...the issue is how scientific and technological activity is to be organised. If the work involved is reserved for top people in a small number of nations, it is obvious that the large gap already created between the world's rich and poor will only widen, with a disastrous effect on the world's economy. ...most people continue to be seen mainly as users of products of science and technology created elsewhere.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §37)

Scientific  
research



# Science for Everyone

A central challenge... is the expansion of scientific and technological activity. Instruments of social and economic change so powerful must no longer belong only to the advantaged segments of society, and must be so organized as to permit people everywhere to participate in such activity on the basis of capacity. Centres of learning should be established throughout the world to enable all peoples to create and apply knowledge.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §38)

# Religion

There are different but equally great challenges facing humanity in its religious life. For most people in the world, it is true that human nature has a spiritual dimension and our fundamental identity is spiritual. In one form or another it has a daily influence in the lives of most people on earth and it awakens powerful hopes.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §39)

# Religion

Efforts of any kind to promote human progress should obviously try to draw on capacities so universal and so creative. Spiritual issues should be central to talk of development. Yet most priorities and assumptions have been determined so far by the materialistic world views of a small minority of the earth's population. If experts say they support universal participation, they cannot refuse the participants' defining cultural experience.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §40)

# Religion

Spiritual and moral issues have historically sometimes created social conflict and blocked human progress. This does not mean that one should not investigate spiritual reality and ignore the deepest roots of human motivation. The refusal to consider these issues has only given the power to shape humanity's future to those that argue that truth is without morals and facts are independent of values.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §41)

# Religion

So far as earthly existence is concerned, many of the greatest achievements of religion have been moral in character. Through its teachings and through the examples of human lives illumined by these teachings, masses of people in all ages and lands have developed the capacity to love. They have learned to discipline the animal side of their natures, to make great sacrifices for the common good, to practise forgiveness, generosity, and trust, to use wealth and other resources to advance civilization.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §42)



# Science and Religion

Our challenge today is to help humankind to advance through a great increase in access to knowledge. The strategy to make this possible must be built around an increasing dialogue between science and religion. In all human activity and at every level, the knowledge and skills from science must be combined with spiritual commitment and moral principle to be applied in the right way.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §43)

# Science and Religion

People need, for example, to learn how to separate fact from guesses, and their personal views from the reality outside. In order to contribute to human progress, individuals and institutions will need to be devoted to truth and detached from their own interests and passions.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §43)

# Science and Religion

Science must also cultivate in all people the capacity to think in terms of process, how things happen, including in history. For this intellectual progress to contribute to development, it must not be influenced by prejudices of race, culture, sex, or narrow religious belief. Similarly, training people to produce wealth will advance development only if the desire comes from the spiritual understanding that service to humankind is the purpose of both individual life and social organisation.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995, §43)

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