



Peter Bell Memorial Lecture

***Wednesday 17th March 2016, West Room,
Leeds Civic Hall***

Can Science and Religion be Reconciled? A Bahá'í view

by Dr Shahin Fatheazam

Dr Fatheazam with
Dr Simon Phillips,
Chair of Concord



FROM the middle of the last century to date the world has witnessed the development of chasm between science and religion to the detriment of humanity. This is primarily due to polarisation of opinions between selected groups of scientists and religious leaders of many religions in their interpretation and understanding of the nature of science and religion.

Bahá'í Faith's view, which upholds as one of its main principles the harmony between science and religion, maintains that science and religion are two independent systems of knowledge that convey the true reality of things in the investigation for truth.

The varying relationship between science and religion since the dawn of modern man (*Homo sapiens*) to the present, namely that of harmony, diversion, antagonism and dialogue, are seen to be arbitrary concepts resulting from such misunderstandings.

The application of the Complimentary Principle in Quantum Mechanics, first postulated by Max Planck and Neils Bohr, to the evaluation of the role of science and religion in the investigation for truth, can take us a long way towards understanding the part each plays in human destiny.

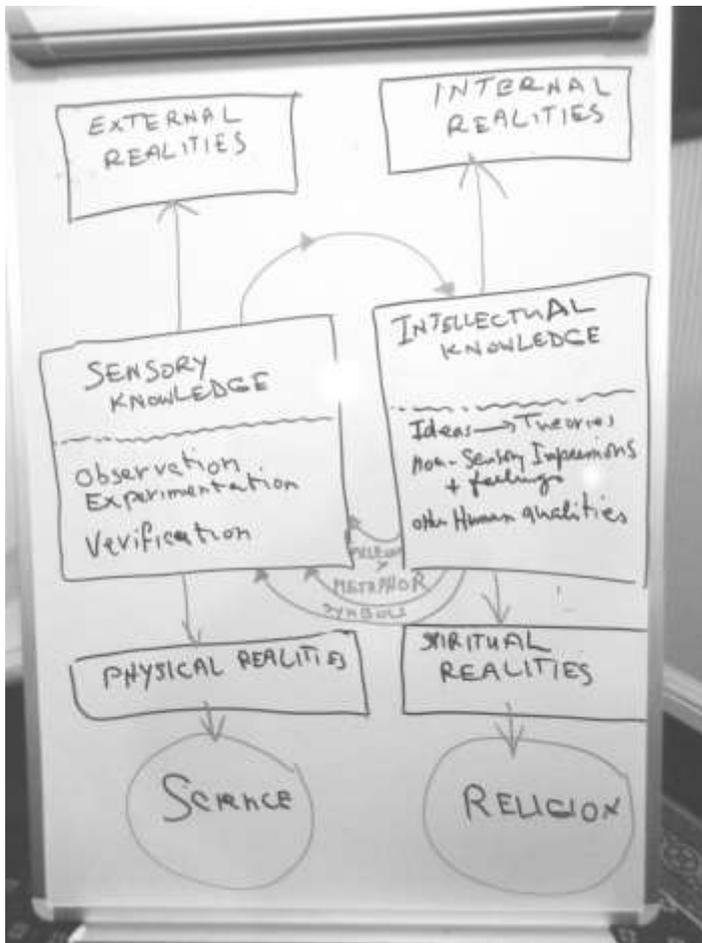
The Bahá'í view expounds that knowledge exists in two forms:

1. Knowledge that is related to external realities and is conveyed to man through the senses. This corresponds to science and scientific methods.
2. Knowledge that is related to internal realities which is subjective and is not accessible through the senses, such as joy, grief, love, ideas etc.

The complimentary and mutually moderating relationship between these two systems propels humanity not only to extend the frontiers of knowledge but also to the better use of this knowledge for the benefit of mankind. Thus the Bahá'í

faith, according to Abdul'Baha, one of its central figures, asserts that:

"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 agencies, its environment is interpreted, its latent powers explored, and its moral and intellectual life disciplined. It is evident, moreover, that the effectiveness of this dual structure has been greatest during these periods when, each in its own sphere, religion and science were able to work in concert.'



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THIS YEAR'S Peter Bell Memorial Lecture was given in March in the West Room, Leeds Civic Hall, by Dr Shahin Fatheazam. He was one of the members of Concord in the early days, and spoke about his admiration for Dr Peter Bell. Dr Fatheazam was a leader of the Bahá'í community in Leeds for many years, and a general practitioner in Alwoodley. On his retirement a few years he and his wife moved to York, to be nearer their family.

His lecture addressed one of the issues much debated today, the relationship between science and religion, drawing upon Bahá'í teachings and perspectives. Dr Fatheazam is a deep thinker and a most accomplished speaker. His lecture was a masterpiece of brevity, cogency and clarity, delivered without reference to notes with an engaging modesty and humour. It was over all too soon, and then he fielded questions from the floor with equally impressive competence. It was a pity that there were not more people present to share a very enjoyable and worthwhile event. We are very grateful to Dr Fatheazam for giving us such a good evening and for allowing us to publish this abstract of his lecture.

John S. Summerwill