



VIEW

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<https://doi.org/10.12725/mjs.2.9>***Scientists Search for Truth*** by W. Mark Richardson and Gofdy Slack

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The basic dialogue between rationality and faith might have started with the origin of human consciousness. rationality evolved into science whereas faith into multitude of religions. the fundamental and profound queries of the meaning of life and death have been with in us since the beginning of the systematic thought. scientific and spiritual quests have traversed different paths. The great modern philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's utterance "God is dead" gives a new twist to the whole dialogue.

In this book twelve eminent scientists, including two Nobel Laureates, share their views in spirituality. All of them assert that there is no conflict between science and faith. It is difficult to codify the different notions of these distinguished intellectuals into a single stream. The spectrum of thoughts covers witchcraft to atheism.

Human consciousness evolves in multi dimensions. It's thirst to conquer can never be quenched. Taming of consciousness can be the ultimate sin. All the poetry, art and knowledge we amassed till date are the consequence of this unquenchable thirst. Consciousness cannot be expanded lopsided - just like each and every part of our body have their own functions, each and every dimensions of our consciousness satisfies equally important needs of our existence. A harmony of all these dimensions makes a perfect one. Science is only one dimension and it can't be the tool to evaluate other dimensions. Francisco Ayala, the Donald Bren Professor of biology says that trying to apply scientific standard to Shakespeare will be silly. In a sonnet Shakespeare refers to his beloved as a rose. Shakespeare knows that she is not a rose. But that is poetry. According to Francisco Ayala a scientific description

and understanding of the world is very valid but he wonders how can one explain freedom in terms of the laws of Physics or the laws of Biology. His thoughts are in tune with Schrodinger's. In his article "Science and Humanism," Schrodinger concludes "Science cannot tell us a word about why music delights us, or why and how an old song can move us to tears."

Paradoxical as it may sound, Isha Upanishad speaks, "It is far and the same is near." How can I miss this scriptural truth when Bruno Guderdoni, an astronomer at the Paris Institute of Astrophysics describes the cosmological principle "far away is like here." (Fritjof Capra in his famous book "The Tao of Physics", brings into limelight, similar types of paradoxes in science). Bruno Guidrdoni comments that in twentieth century science and faith are converging to the same reality. But he laments that something is missing in the scientific approach of the world.

Charles Townes, Nobel Laureate in Physics, reminds me of Nikos Kazantzakis. In his famous novel, 'Freedom and Death', Kazantzakis describes science in the following lines.

"They (the new generation) believe in a new god head, a cruel, great-power one,"

"In what?"

"In science"

"Mind without soul. In the Devil, that means."

Charles Townes comments that just like any religion, science too is governed by a faith - scientism. He says, "We have faith that the universe follows reliable laws and the physical laws are real. The faith that scientists have is not that different from believing in on reliable God."

While Charles Townes emphasises that science has a tremendous sense of values - especially Truth and Beauty, Brian Candwell Smith, a professor of philosophy and computer science argues that science subtracts values - except truth. Beauty and Goodness are allowed to let go. He is optimistic about the future and hopes that science will bring back the values into its own domain - Put mattering, back into matter. He is convinced that today's evil - religious fundamentalism - has risen out of the dissatisfaction in materialistic values prevailing in today's world. He is in tune with the Upanishads when he comments that the world and God are one and the same. For him, to be religious is to find the world significant.

Schrodinger in his monumental work "What is Life" comments : "Hence I am God Almighty." The same idea is reflected in the thoughts of Pauline Rudd, a reader in Glycobiology, at the University of Oxford. She says, "I believe that all of us are born with a life spark within us, which I call God, the deepest root and ground of my being. She imagines that if God can be identified with animate things, he can be identified with inanimate things like a molecule or the universe. She is critical of the biologists who attributed everything concerned with life to genetics. If it is so how can one have the free will to think about different possibilities - she rightly argues.

While the whole dialogue aims at the search for God, one of the Nobel Laureates in Physics, Arno Penzias pricks us by asking, "Which carpenter will leave saw marks on the walls ? It is precisely the elegant lack of God's finger prints on the world that tells us the most about the creator." Penzias views scientific method as one which stood up against the test of opposition and is a valuable way of thinking about the world. But he gets annoyed when some scientists claim that they could know the mind of God. According to Penzias, science is limited to a certain kind of knowledge and is incapable of describing God.

Kenneth Kendler, a professor of psychiatry, talks about the effect of prayer on human psyche. He meditates daily to bring in the rhythm in life, to appreciate each day as it comes. As expected of an introvert, he is for internal religiosity rather than for ritualistic external religiosity. He says that God is a good protector against the depressogenic effects of stressful circumstances. He, rather than trying to prove the existence of God, is stressing on the need for God experience.

For John Rodwell, the professor of Plant Ecology, his taxonomic work of naming a plant is not different from the blessings he performs as a priest whereas Anne Forest, professor of computer science and theology at Bonaventure University, dreams of baptizing Cog, a humanoid robot. For the radical theorist Mark Perce, witchcraft is a method of harmonising oneself with the cycle of time. According to Mehdi Golshani, the distinguished professor of physics at Sharif University, philosophy and science are complementary tools for understanding nature. Physicist Joel Primack visualises divine intervention even in scientific discoveries.

Most of the writers argue that mysteries unsolved by science can not be taken as the proof for the existence of God. They feel that this 'God of Gaps' approach is a continuous retreat since science in due course of time could be able to solve most of these mysteries. Another aspect of science which was widely criticized throughout

this book is the reductionism. They argue that the reduction of biology to the laws of physics and chemistry is not possible. Francisco Ayala asks "How can one explain freedom in terms of the laws of physics?"

This book is successful in convincing the readers that spirituality itself can't be approached through a well defined path. The catchy titles of the articles reflect the essence of the texts. In this excellent collections of interviews, we have a new insight, a new understanding of the new dimensions of spirituality. This book brings a gentle breeze of hope.

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