

Unifying Science and Mysticism

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Ending the long-running war between science and religion is incredibly simple, but far from easy, of course. For if it were easy, it would have happened long ago. For aren't Love and Peace what nearly every one of us longs for more than anything else in the world?

We can begin to heal this deep wound in the human psyche by noting that God and Universe are the incompatible contextual concepts for religion and science, respectively. So what is God and what is the Universe? No one has ever seen either God or the Universe, as we might see a rose, for instance. So what are they?

Well, the concept of the Universe is essentially a composite one, built up by aggregating and projecting the concepts of our day-to-day experience, most commonly focusing attention on what we can sense with our five senses, leaving our thoughts, feelings, and emotions out of the overall picture. On the other hand, the concept of God has arisen in human consciousness because many have sensed an immanent, transcendent Presence (literally 'prior to existence'), which cannot really be understood even in terms of feelings, never mind the physical senses.

It might seem from these perspectives of God and the Universe that it is impossible to find a common context for science and mysticism. But if we are willing to look afresh at our beliefs, then it is quite easy to discover that which we all share in common, no matter what our cultural background might be. It takes just six steps, a little like the mathematical proofs that Benedict de Spinoza used in *The Ethics*.

1. John wrote in his first Epistle: "God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him," words that Pope Benedict XVI took as the text for his first encyclical '*Caritas Deus Est*.'
2. The Sufi poet Rumi said, "Love is the sea of not-being and there intellect drowns," 'not-being' being *Anatman* in Buddhism. So as many people today are discovering in their own direct experience through meditation and other spiritual practices, Love is the immanent Divine Essence that we all share. They can thus say, "I am Love," if they will.
3. Therefore, from (1) and (2), "God is me," a statement that is true for all beings in the Universe, not only intelligent human beings.
4. In the collective, we can thus say, "God is the Totality of Existence". There is not anything in existence that is not God.
5. But the Universe is the Totality of Existence
6. Therefore, from (4) and (5), "God is the Universe," a transcendent view of God simply expressed in *Consciousness Speaks* by the late Ramesh S. Balsekar, a former President of the Bank of India and an Advaita sage, in these words: "All there is, is Consciousness." This universal principle is beautifully expressed in the Sanskrit word *Satchidananda*, a compound of *Sat* 'absolute, eternal, unchanging Being', *Chit* 'absolute Consciousness', and *Ananda* 'bliss, absolute joy'.

We can thus see that Love is the Divine Essence that we all share and Consciousness is the Cosmic Context for all our lives, no matter where we might live. If everyone on Earth could thus realize this Truth, there would be no more Holy wars—wars about the Whole—or wars between science and religion. All this needs is for the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to say, with the Hindus, for instance, "*Tat tvam asi*" 'That thou art', and for the scientists to accept that Ultimate Reality is Consciousness, not the physical universe of our senses.

QED 'Quite easily done'.