

Navigating the Borders of Science, Religion, & Superstition

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Key Points:

- 1) Science, Religion, Philosophy and Art are four different paths to universal Truths.
- 2) Science explores the physical world while religion concerns the spiritual world and morality.
- 3) As a reaction to overwhelming changes in society and the violence of the 20th century, three extremist reactions appear: clinging to religious **Fundamentalism**; accepting **Atheism**, indifference or Relativism; and falling for **Pseudosciences** and Quasi-Religions.
- 4) The Bahá'í Faith offers a **Middle Way**, showing science and religion must be **balanced**.
- 5) The Bahá'í Faith is **Pluralistic**, but not **Relativistic** – we respect people's right to their own beliefs, but we accept only some belief systems as true, others, false.
- 6) We use **Critical Thinking**, science, and logic to evaluate which beliefs fit into the Bahá'í worldview. With great freedom of choice and availability of information, we are all responsible for our own investigations.
- 7) **Religions** are belief systems that claim to be divinely inspired. *Example:* we can evaluate Sikhism as a likely authentic religion due to its similarities to other Bahá'í-accepted faiths.
- 8) **Philosophies** are man-made belief systems. Some of their ideas may be congruent with the Bahá'í Faith. *Example:* Theosophy offers good ideas, such as the oneness of humanity, but also accepts past lives, crystals, Atlanteans, and other Pseudosciences.
- 9) **Pseudosciences** use the trappings of science to appear authentic, but are either unintentionally mistaken (**misinformation**), or intentionally fraudulent (**disinformation**). *Example:* Scientology is a **Quasi-Religion** that uses concepts from psychology and Buddhism but also has many erroneous beliefs.
- 10) Other Pseudosciences include dowsing, astrology, UFO abductions, faith healing, ghosts, Bigfoot, crystals, Crop Circles, *The Bible Code*, *The Celestine Prophecy*, psychics ...

Recommended Reading:

The Demon-Haunted World, Carl Sagan: The best possible introduction to Critical Thinking.

Why People Believe Weird Things, Michael Shermer

The Roving Mind, Isaac Asimov

Einstein and Buddha, The Parallel Sayings, Thomas J. McFarlane

Philosophy, Edward Craig; **Atheism**, Julian Baggini – Very Short Introduction series

The Mind of God, Paul Davies

Buddhism and the Bahá'í Faith and **Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith**, Moojan Momen

One Common Faith, Letter from Universal House of Justice

The Quantum and the Lotus, Matthieu Ricard & Trinh Xuan Thuan

Belief in God in an Age of Science, John Polkinghorne

Violence & Compassion, Dialogues, His Holiness The Dalai Lama

Angels & Demons, Dan Brown

The Week & The Economist: The most fair and balanced newsweeklies available.

Snopes.com: Simple facts on every urban legend, Pseudoscience, and Internet spam forward.

Please www.jkrweb.com/think for more information about Critical Thinking, as well as my art, photography, book reviews and information about the Bahá'í Faith, and Nonviolence.

Contact me at jesse@jesserichards.com. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!