

BOOK REVIEW

GOD, RELIGION AND SCIENCE

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God, Religion and Science

Professor Md. Azizur Rahman Laskar. First Published: March 2014. Sylhet: Pandulipi Prokashon, Bangladesh. 399 pp. Price: BDT 700, \$30. ISBN: 978-984-8922-61-3

The three magical words, God, Religion and Science, have a great impact, directly or indirectly, upon the human knowledge and civilization. The notion of God or a creator is, probably, one of the preliminary questions of philosophy and human thought. And, perhaps, God is also the utmost answer of the thinkers for the limitation of human knowledge. The other word, religion, is the most influential social institution of the world that covers all aspects of human life and most importantly, gives solutions, though debatable in some extent, regarding the human curiosities about the nature. Finally, Science; without which we can't go a day, and even a minute, has nothing to talk about its importance and extension.

The book "God, religion and Science" is not an original thought as thousands of books written on these issues. Surely, this is a continuation of the field. The core theme of this book is to prove the superiority of God over the creatures and the necessity of religion, especially Islam, for the human being. From the very view point of a believer, a Muslim, Professor Laskar tries to find out some solutions of human queries and brings to a conclusion of the confusing ideas prevailing among some people about God and divinity.

The author, Md Azizur Rhaman Laskar, a retired Professor of Botany at the national University of Bangladesh, has spent a glorious service life in Bangladesh and Nigeria. As a practicing Muslim and a botanist as well, he is quite competent to have such books. His another book, "*Prokriti, Biggan O Dharma*" (Nature, Science and Religion) written in Bengali was appreciated by the readers, both general people and thinkers.

The Book is of Two parts with a short introduction and bibliography. First Part, consist of 17 chapters, may be divided into 3 sections. Firstly, discussion of the concept of God, His nature and power and the basic beliefs of Islam are the core theme of this section. Secondly, a general study of religion with their comparison was discussed very clearly. Besides, the similarities and

dissimilarities among the religions, their origins and teachings are also found here. Finally, some norms, values and rituals of Islam and its correlation with science is compared in several sections of the book. The Second Part has three valuable chapters, *the Universe, Life and living world, Evolution, Divine revelation and man*, concerning the resemblance of some scientific truth and Islamic views.

This book is written in a simple and easy way to understand. It is nevertheless, very informative, well designed and formal in style. The author develops his idea gradually, which helps the readers to realize the theme without feeling trouble in reading. In relevant matters professor Laskar uses the necessary figures, tables, pictures and diagrams to clarify the readers' concept.

'There is no conflict between science and religion' - certainly, this is the main theme of the book. As some people believe the creation of universe, life cycle of the animals, plants, human beings and organization of the earth are occurring by the nature and there is no room for God, the Author wants to take away these misunderstandings scholarly. He logically explains these matters, ends up with the limitation of human knowledge and finally turned to the belief of existence of God. The invisible entities, the supernatural elements and the Miracles make him a believer in God and religion. In quest for the reasons of misunderstandings, Professor Laskar brings the concept of Satan or Evil into light. Moreover, he finds out some basic instincts such as - Rationality, innovation and attraction of variations, which, he thought, derailed human being and mislead them towards ignorance.

First and most importantly, Professor Laskar has tried his very best to give a clear idea of science. He considered every systematic study as science like the branches of pure science. He not only mentioned Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry etc as science, but also did not hesitate to claim the other branches of knowledge such as Music, Agriculture, Fine arts as science. He said, "*Most of us think that language, literature and fine arts have no connection with science; rather these are far away from science. But it is not correct.*" (p.282)

Professor Laskar describes science as an essential element to eliminate errors, to impart correct information and to establish genuine truth in all branches of knowledge. Based on these characteristics he examined all the religions and finally argues that Islam is the only scientific religion having no superstitions and irrational thoughts.

In addition, in the final chapter of the book, Professor Laskar in his discourse of Evolution, gradual change in nature and creation, denies the extremist views about it. He wrote, "*Some people think that a man having faith in God should not believe in evolution. While others totally refute evolution; and some believe that man has evolved from monkey-like irrational ancestor*" (*Preface*). According to Professor Laskar, there is nothing to disagree with evolution theory and we found both evolution and stasis, the lack of change, in nature. He provides a good deal of examples of evolution from human being and other species. Yet, without any doubt he refutes the idea of evolution in the creation of mankind, and concludes the discussion going with the religious concept in this regard.

However, Professor Laskar wants to prove the religion with scientific accuracy, but in some extent he uses the beliefs which are not recognized by the scientists at all. In fact, the

supernatural entities like Jinn, Satan, Angels etc and the other philosophical entries are no more valuable to the modern scientists. Even existence of God, soul and hereafter are also denied by the pure scientists. So, it is somehow very difficult of correlate between the religion and science in this regard. In addition, the chapters of comparative religion have the least importance in term of the title. Though the discussion of common features of the major religions is important, but the general description of the religions would be better to ignore.

In conclusion, “God, Religion and Science” is a beautifully written manuscript for the general reader of religion and for those who has already a specialization of this field to think deep in the discipline. The author provides a theological framework to prove a clear connection among God, religion and Science and takes a systematic approach to develop the idea. This book be of interest to students and thinkers of Theology, comparative religion and in particular of those who want to know Islam scientifically. This book may help fill the gap, at least a little, in removing the misunderstanding about Islam. Though the scope of this field is huge, Professor Laskar has done a wonderful job, accomplished his idea very clearly. But as none can shape a discipline perfect in a small book, I think, this work is not the end. Surely, it will pull the trigger to go ahead with several researches in future.