

BALANCING THE POLARITY: SCIENCE & RELIGION

Rev. John T. Crestwell, Jr. February 9, 2020

(VIDEO CONCLUDES)

(Sermon SLIDE UP)

Entanglement is so fascinating to me. It's like magic. It says that science does not have all the answers. I get goose-bumps thinking about what this means, potentially. It proves that we are right in our UU earth-based understanding that we are a part of an interdependent web of existence—the 7th principle. Science is showing us this entanglement now and religion has said this for ages. Today, when I speak of religion, I'm really talking about original religion before it was co-opted and changed into institutional dogmas across the planet. I'm talking more about the religions that venerated the 4-seasons and the stars; religion that was based in observation, feeling, and the study of the heavens.

I'm talking about the “pagan” religions. Groups like the ancient Druids, Nubians, Sumerians, Celts, Bushman, Pygmies, Vedic culture, Native American and Mayan culture, indigenous peoples, and the like; earth-centered religion that was the originator of a view of the world that was both religious and scientific; a worldview that understood the connection we have with the earth, sea and sky.

Before we became so “advanced” we were connected to mother-earth in a way that gave insight and awe. The first religion was metaphysics, when religion and science were considered one in the same process. Look that up before you dispute me...

As UUs, we affirm this tradition in our 6 sources. Source #1 says: “*We believe in the direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;*”

And our 6th source says that we believe in “*Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.*”

What is the circle of life? It is the motion of the earth, planets, moons, and stars is it not? When I’ve discussed mastering your patterns to master your life—when I’m talking about noticing things more—the plain stuff right in front of you—to be here now—to be present to receive your present—the gift of the present moment, AM I NOT talking about the rhythm and harmony in nature? I’m as much a Naturalist as I am a Mystic. I am both religious and scientific. I think most of us are. When I say the universe is constantly expanding, infinitely and therefore you must expand onward and outward forever, AM I NOT sharing with you the divine entanglement pattern and process? Our UU Sources implicitly tell us that WE ARE the earth and cosmos—made of the same star stuff, as Carl Sagan put it. We are it and it is us. Therefore, we are science and religion. If we are “just science” (only data driven and evidence-based), then we are denying the mystery of the unknown. There is no magic, no mystery, just facts. Solving for X is what gives us meaning; and religion/spirituality is all about mystery, and miracles. We are the both/and people. And because of this connection, we make space for others who come to the mystery in their own way. We do that at here at UUCA with how we worship; and how we engage with those in the community. We are *inclusive and exclusive*. Inclusive in our welcoming and acceptance AND exclusive in what we CHOOSE to individually believe. But we must make space for both. We are individual and collective. Both/AND.

Let me go back to this entanglement mystery... Entanglement is the current ‘hot-topic’ in science. Do we continue with Newtonian classical physics (the scientific method) or step into the “spooky action at a distance” as Einstein put it; the world of the quantum, where the classical rules don’t work the same way—where things may have to take a, dare I say, “religious” or “spiritual” or “faith”-oriented turn? That is the dilemma. On your scientific & religious journey you meet the God dilemma (to be or not to be) again and again.

Entanglement says that if two things (particles) have become connected/joined/entangled in their spin; AND then they are separated and placed light-years apart, they will still operate as one unit. “What created this? Who created this? If it was not created, then how is this possible? I don’t know. However, if we apply quantum entanglement to human beings, it means that we are made of the same stuff. What does that mean for us? Are we many versions of ourselves? Do we become forever linked with every person, place or thing that we have become entangled with? What does this mean? **And looking out at you** with all of your tangled webs, **either Spider-Man has been here**, or you have been shown a clear example of how we become entangled as humans through our interactions and energy transference.

Let’s look at this a bit more because I think the Great Teachers like Einstein and Buddha, Jesus and Newton, Tesla and Gandhi, secular and religious teachers (both) were showing us that, in fact, we are connected with each other & the earth, stars and cosmos.

Definitions: **SCIENCE Definition (Merriam-Webster)**

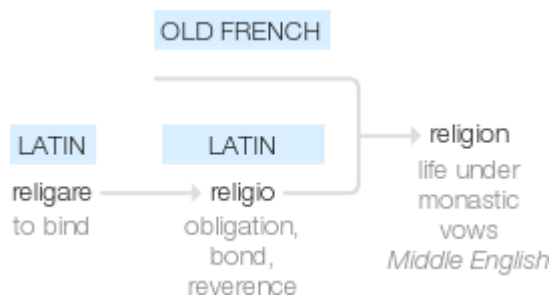
-is the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment; knowledge of any kind; organized knowledge **(SLIDE UP)**



Science is knowledge (knowing) about the visible world. It is based in reason. Reason is: the power of the mind to think and understand. Einstein said: “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.” I think he understood that quantum-thinking requires a multi-dimensional approach in life.

In religion, the Gnostics and the philosopher Pythagoras, and others, believed the mantra: “as above so below”, as within, so without.” Religion and science are both about knowing; understanding of our grand purpose. The word Gnostic means “knowing”. To know. That is the same as the definition of science—to know—knowledge. In religious language the word “know” is one of the most intimate words one can use. That God knew him or her implies that God’s spirit was breathed into that person, intimately. When Adam “knew” Eve they consummated their union. This is a metaphysical story about the monad becoming a dyad. The Yin and Yang consummating their marriage and giving birth to humanity. You could say that two atoms became entangled and reproduced.

Definition of *religion*



1. the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods (wiki)
2. a particular system of faith.
3. sacred system of beliefs that bind an individual or group

As UUs we have a belief and faith in powers that we understand and don't understand.

Some of us believe in God or gods. Some of us believe in humanity. We all have faith and belief in something. And that's why we are a faith-tradition. What is faith? FAITH is: trust or confidence in someone or something. As UUs, we trust in our faith's historic liberal tradition—that it is a way to create a fairer and more just world. That's faith.

My point today on this Science Sunday is that the sacred and profane, faith and reason are not mutually exclusive but work together. I'm asking you to become more ambidextrous with your constructs.

SLIDE UP: Sir Isaac Newton said: "Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who sets the planets in motion."

But science is getting closer, and as they get closer to the First-Cause, they will find that the basic teachings in religion are right. As they analyze the fractal patterns and angles, and shapes, and sounds, and chemical reactions, frequencies, and forms, they will find **faith/religion** standing at the door and saying, Hi! I told you we were on to something!" And for the religious practitioner who is determined not to stop in their search for God and meaning; for love, peace, and goodwill—as they get closer and closer to their answer regarding the human condition, they will find that the basic teachings in science are right. As they analyze the origins of the words; and the origin of the teachings; and the origin of the teachers, they will find that science is looking at them saying, "I told you we were on to something."

The two that got separated a long time ago but are still entangled and co-creating our world.

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper said that we are “tied in a great big bundle of humanity.” And Dr. King, a black Baptist preacher (never forget that—he was a Christian minister), Dr. King, who was influenced by Harper’s words would, years later, say to millions that “we are tied together inextricably in a single garment of destiny.” They both learned this science in their respective religions and through observation.

My message to you has been much the same, so far this year. Why? Because I think that moving humanity forward requires this shift in perspective. For us to embody what oneness means at a deep level so that it becomes harder and harder for me /us to be satisfied with the unequal system we live in. There’s too much suffering that does not have to be. To fix this world, I believe that we UUs must evolve past the God/no-god debate; past the fear of things that are “religious”. Religion is an ancient practice by all human beings. And it will never lose its power so long as there are humans on the planet. Also, we’ve gotta find a way to mature past the EITHER / OR construct and get out of our own way, toward leading the world in what I think is a new religious revolution taking place. “Knowing is happening all around.” (Barnes & Nobles)

There is no separation between physics and metaphysics; profane or sacred. It’s a false-dichotomy. Keep updating your inner software, less we run the risk of becoming dogmatic and harsh in our thinking. If we are not willing to keep asking questions and opening our circle of understanding we can get stuck.

Whatever path you choose to live your “one wild and precious life”; if that path is not challenging you and growing your soul—causing awe and thanksgiving—as well as some fear and tears, you may be stuck.

I don't want you to be stuck. I don't want you or our faith to be stuck. That's why I believe that our central task is to balance the polarities in our minds. We must balance the tension. The science/religion debate, truly, personifies our inner tensions. But as I see it, when you fix yourself, you fix your community; fix your community, fix your nation. Fix your nation, fix your world.

When we fix our religion, we will fix our science. When we fix our science, we will fix our religion. We are all entangled in a giant web of possibilities; and our central task is to balance the polarities that divide us. May it be so. Amen.