

A Response to “Without God” – by Steven Weinberg, The New York Review of Books

SWAMI BODHANANDA

25 September 2008



Dear Sri Shah,

Thank you for sending me this article on 'Religion Versus Science'. I think it is an impartial assessment of the present state of the ageold controversy between these two disciplines. One thing we all agree, whether people of faith or science, is that human being with his limited mind will never fathom fully the mystery of existence. At the same time we have this insatiable urge to know and expand the area of our knowledge. We know that there is a cognitive limit, yet we want to break out of it.

The science -religion conflict is due to a fussy categorization of domains. Religion is old science and science is new religion which will become old in turn. The Vedas answer this question with a puzzled poser: 'Does any body know?' 'Those who claim they know don't know', says the Kena Upanishad. Truth is beyond the 'known and the unknown', say all Upanishads. We have to go through all truth claims with a fine tooth comb. Personally I prefer to challenge all truth claims -- be it scientific or religious. But I choose to live by certain values like truth, non-violence, and sharing, pray for inner purity and continue to ask questions. Humility and openmindedness are the hall amrk of a spiritual seeker. I find problems with both science and religious claims.

What I find distasteful in the article is his settling for a drab mediocre life. This Nobel laureate may get his fulfillment from scientific pursuits. But what about those who are not interested in science? There are other ways of seeking fulfillment and defining experiences. I don't want to convert a scientist, but I am willing to listen to him, just to know what he knows. If he is curious he will listen to me to know what I know. In the process not only we understand each other but also we understand better what we thought we understood before. For a pure scientist, religion may be of little value, but for a religious person science is of immense value.

A religious person is more responsible than a scientist. Scientist may say the brute fact as he knows it, religious person knows that facts may lie and he asks his soul or conscience for guidance. A responsible scientist and a spiritual person think alike. Both will be nonviolent. They will not be interested in converting each other, but will be ready to converse with one another. I think the final test of spirituality is not the certainty about Truth or God, but our willingness to

talk with each other respectfully. Ahimsa Paramo Dharma- nonviolence is supreme spirituality.

I thoroughly enjoyed your response and understand your anguish about a respected scientist propagating crap consumerism, atheism and moral relativism. But as an Advaita spiritualist I think he has a point. Truth is one, but pundits speak differently.

I leave for India on the 10th of November.

Please give my regards to Vibha Shah,

Love,
Swami Bodhananda.

Source: Email response to Mr Shah
Date: Thu, 6 Nov 2008 21:10:39 -0800
Subject: Re: The Article "Without God"

Swami Bodhananda is Chairman, Sambodh Foundation, India; The Sambodh Society Inc. USA; and Bodhananda Research Foundation for Management & Leadership Studies. He is the Inspiration and Guiding Force for all Sambodh institutions.