

International Conference on
Philosophy, Religion and Science in Conversation
Experiences from East and West

University of Madras

March 22-23, 2017

Concept note:

Philosophy, religion and science are three major dimensions of life which have been journeying along not merely at conceptual, epistemological and technological domains, but also at the level of everyday living. Philosophy, as understood in the West, starting with Aristotle, is a reflexive critical gaze upon the physical and metaphysical world, while the same, as understood in the East, starting with Vedic-Upaniṣadic thought, is a path towards self-realisation; religion, as reflected upon in the West, stands for an endeavour to bring together, in an attempt to make a bond, between the immanent world and the transcendent God, while, the same in the East, as *mārgas* or paths, stand for the practice of traditions which is needed for attaining *mokṣa/mukti* or ultimate liberation; science, while both for the West and East, represents the *techne*, the tool-based systematic and experimental enquiry, resulting in myriad forms of ‘technologies’ as found in fields of knowledge, and has diversified in terms of such dynamics as synthesis (East) and analysis (West).

Historical contours of these dimensions of life (philosophy, religion and science) have been arduous and complex. Philosophy, through logic and epistemology, has journeyed through the birth of fields of knowledge, which have now been ‘enshrined’ in institutions of formal education and continue to live on as a hermeneutical engagement in various walks of life. Religion, similarly, has pilgrimaged through an age of institutional stability (monarchical age of state sponsored religions both in West and East), through arid terrain of extreme secularity (especially in the West) to a contemporary revival (both in West and East) as found in new age religious movements, public religion, etc. Science, walking through historical struggles for its existence, has resulted today in micro-fields of specialization as witnessed to in genetic engineering, nano-science, etc.

The relationship between these dimensions of life has been very complex – congenial as well as conflictual. We have witnessed to relentless seekers who have experienced certain congeniality between them. For example, Albert Einstein, who said “religion without science is blind, and science without religion is lame,” had a vision of congeniality between them. However, we find also personalities and institutions who / which hold on to a conflict between them. While aspects of congeniality have contributed to great civilizational strides, elements of conflicts have, though not without their lessons, shown up in acts of violence, unmeaning social exclusions, deprivation of resources, and so on.

Today, we are living in an era which, more than ever, needs mutual fecundations, critical though, between these dimensions for the cause of peace, justice and harmony not merely for human beings, but for various life-forms and for the ecosystem in general. Critical mutuality we need between these dimensions, not only in terms of generalities, but also in terms of differing emphases in different regions of the world.

Having this need in mind, the School of Philosophy and Religious Thought at the University of Madras is organising at the University of Madras, Chennai, an international conference in March 2017.

Call for Papers:

We invite papers, based on researches – empirical, philosophical, and experiential, that can be presented during the conference on the various aspects of the critical relationship between philosophy, religion and science.

Paper presenters can opt for any type – panel, posters, papers, etc. with in-person participation or video-conferencing. We expect an abstract of 300 words not later than 31st December 2016. Once selected, you are required to send your final paper by 15th March 2017. Conference will be held on 22-23 March 2017.

Conference Details:

- Conference will begin on 22nd March at 10.00 am with a key-note address, and proceed with plenary and parallel sessions until 5.00 pm on 23rd March 2017.
- Each individual paper presenter will get 20 minutes (15 minutes presentation and 5 minutes discussion), and a panel of three will be given 60 minutes.
- Paper presenters will be given food and snacks during the conference; they will have to take care of their travel and board.

➤ Registration fee:

US \$ 250 for foreign paper presenters
US \$ 150 for foreign participants
Rs. 2000 for Indian paper presenters
Rs. 1000 for Indian participants
Rs. 500 for Indian research students.

- Registration fee includes the cost of a conference dinner on 22nd March
- Registration fee will have to be paid into the account of the University of Madras. Account number and other details on the mode of payment will be communicated later.
- The organising team is ready to organise a tour of important sites in and around Chennai on 24th March for a cost of US \$ 50 or Rs. 3000, provided there are sufficient number of takers. Kindly include a sentence in your proposal whether you wish to go on this tour.

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