

For many Jews and Christians, it has been possible to hold both science and religion by granting each of them dominion in their separate realms. The argument goes this way: Science tells us about the physical world, religion about the spiritual. Science gives us facts; religion gives us values. Science answers questions of what and how; religion answers questions of why.

This dividing of the territory is enormously appealing to many scientists, religious people and especially those who are both. I am certain you all know such people. Each of our religions has such a modernist tradition. I have recently been learning from the work of Dr. Seyyid Hossein Nasr how such a tradition functioned in 19th and 20th century Islam. As he put it, "One studies science and says ones prayers ; there is no philosophical conflict." As Dr. Nasr points out, however (and as many Christians and Jews believe as well) the compartments seem to resist staying separate. All of our traditions make a full claim on our lives and ask for a commitment that should impact all our thinking and our life. Thus, the third option. In this option, we remain true to our faith but also open ourselves to how modern science might change the way we understand it. At the same time, we ask how our faith might help us raise challenges to some of the implications of modern science and technology.

THREE: TO LEARN AND TO TEACH

Enlightenment can indeed flow in both directions. A religious thinker may bring scientific understanding of the world to bear on theology and actually shape and reshape the claims of religion to incorporate what is understood about the natural world. Two examples come to mind from Christianity: the 19th century priest/paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin and the 20th century Anglo-American