

# **Ethics in Science from the Viewpoint of Sheikh Bahāyī**

Hamidreza Ayatollahy

## **Two-graded science**

According to Sheikh Bahāyī, science has two levels which relate to each other longitudinally: metaphorical science and true science. One can say that whatever Sheikh has said is comprehensible according to these classifications (Kōlīyāt pp 29-33; p 44)

## **Metaphorical/Untrue science**

It is the down grade level of science which is acquired by human reason. Whoever capable of rational engagement and witting to make the effort, may obtain it and be in the same rank as scholars. Metaphorical or formal science cannot go further than the appearances of the objects, and loses the depth of truth even if it is great and extensive in its own place. This science is of instrumental significance in managing mundane aspects of human existence, but it does not leave any essential trace on scholar's soul and spirit. It may provide man with external ranks, but it never endows upon him internal growth or perfection. He doesn't enjoy his science. He does not feel satisfaction or salvation and does not reach peace, tranquility or love (refer: Kōlīyāt pp 5, 17, 16, 6, 29-33, 38-40, 44, 65).

## **The Relations between Ethics and Metaphorical science**

There is no real relation between Ethics and metaphorical science. Ethical prescriptions for such a scholar are like those for others. To possess science is not necessarily that to mount to ethical integrity as there is great risk that science may be employed for immoral aims and leading us to corruption as well as meaner grades, even lower than lay people (Kashkūl p 163). The nature of such science is so that it is unitable with both the virtue and the vices. Interpretations like the scholar without practice (Al-makhlāh p 19 & 25, Kashkūl p 198, Kōlīyāt Ash'ār p 120) or mal-practice (Kashkūl p 167) the

hedonistic scholar (Kōlīyāt pp 189-192, 121) etc. are related to this level. Any how the scholar with metaphorical orientation either by observing moralities is able to obtain True science or shall instead decline to the regress of vices. Thus, for man neither repose nor aimless movement is possible.

### **True science**

This level is the science of essences the scholar of the objects and reaching into the internal and deep layers of the reality. It enables to set the stage for perfection of the soul and the spirit by changing the copper of his corporeal science to the pure gold as well as flowering his relationships with the world by filling him with passion of love (Kōlīyāt pp 5 & 32), leading him to the right path (Kōlīyāt pp 7 & 47), and endowing upon him salvation and redemption (rf. Kōlīyāt As'ār pp 5, 17, 16, 6, 29, 33, 38-40, 44, 65, the first Hadith of Arba'īn, pp 17-18, Kashkūl pp 507-510).

### **The Relation of Ethics with True science**

The most elevated degrees of Ethics are inevitable for this level of science. The firm relation between these two is such that Ethics like stomach makes the scholar's soul ready to receive the true science. Observance of moralities is the condition to step to this area. The moral recommendations can just be reminded to the scholars of this level. It is evident that the scholar attains much upper degrees of the True science as much higher degrees of Ethics he observes.

### **The Relation of True Science with Religion**

According to Sheikh Bahāyī, the higher degrees of true science are not acquired through books but merely through connecting with the origin of existence and direct overflow. Prophets are the pioneers of such a path and scholars are their heirs (Kōlīyāt p 51, Kashkūl p 152) and trustees (Kashkūl p 167). The subject of this science is the elevated realities of the world i.e. origin, resurrection and spiritual reality of man and world. This

eternal science, opposed to the formal sciences, accompanies man to the all levels of existence (Kashkūl pp 507-510), by making him humble to the origin of the world (Kōlīyāt p 7), as well as setting him from the multiplicity of polytheism (Kōlīyāt pp 32-33) and also redeeming him in the Afterlife.

## **Scholarly Ethics**

Explaining Sheikh's bases of Scholarly Ethics, we may categorize the virtues and vices stressed by him in this field:

### **1. The Relation between the Scholar and God**

Submission and love

Observing all moralities i.e. logical, legal and constant abstinence in this respect.

### **2. The Relation of the Scholar with science**

Trustworthiness and avoidance of disloyalty (Kashkūl p 167)

Practicing science (Kōlīyāt p 12, Al-Makhlāh pp 19 & 25, Kashkūl p 198)

Inquiry & not imitation (Kōlīyāt p 159, 172 & 236)

Moderation and avoidance of blind prejudice (ibid)

Prompt confession of what he does not know (Al-Makhlāh p 18)

Accepting what he does not know (Kashkūl p 510)

Avoidance of claiming what he does not know (Kōlīyāt p 16)

Asking what he does not know (Al-Makhlāh p 18)

### **3. The relation of the scholar and others:**

#### **1. With other scholars:**

Accepting criticism (margins to Man Lā Yahzarhō-L-faqīh p 313)

Listening and understanding the opposite ideas and judging with fairness.

Broad-heartedness, tolerance and endurance, perfect respect to the teachers (Al-Makhlāh p 24).

#### **2. When you are caught before an ignorant person:**

If he is lower than him, don't show off

If he is higher than him, take into account his accomplishment

If he is the same as him, tolerance should be practiced (Kashkūl p 358).

3. With students:

Generosity in teaching and avoidance of envy (Kashkūl p 198, Al-Makhlāh pp 6-7)

Observance of the class of students and disclaiming upper levels (Kashkūl p 150)

Protection of science against aberrant (Al-Makhlāh p 20, Margins to Man Lā Yahzar p 313, Kashkūl p 173).

4. With Rulers:

Remoteness and avoiding to become their tools (Kashkūl pp 166-167, 36 & Al-Makhlāh p 20).

5. With Public

Avoiding demagoging, hypocrisy and discord (Kōlīyāt pp 16-17)

Seclusion and isolation (Kōlīyāt pp 6-7, 121, Kashkūl pp 446, 365, Hadith 18 from Arbaʿīn)

6. With the World:

Asceticism and simplicity and avoiding surrender to the world (Kōlīyāt pp 8, 121, 189-192)

Abstinence of unlawful wealth (Kōlīyāt p 8).