

# **SCIENCE AND RELIGION**

## **PRESENTATION**

**BY**

**Group III**

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**Based on the texts “The Star” by Arthur C. Clarke  
and “The Hammer of God” by G. K. Chesterton**

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**H1:** Good Morning, class. I am H1. (H2 introduces- > I am H2). Today we have with us six members from group 3 who will be participating in the panel discussion on how science and religion play their parts in knowledge generation. The two texts that they would use to support their claims are “The Star” and “The Hammer of God.”

**H2:** Science and Religion are such broad concepts that they can take multiple meanings depending on the setting. Let’s hear what the panelists discussing the text ”The Star” have to say about the definitions of science and religion in terms of how their protagonist generates knowledge.

**A1:** The Star mainly defines Science as the *observation* of the external world and *inferences* you can draw from it. It is the *only contributor* to the process of knowledge generation. We see this in how the Jesuit priest uses scientific devices and existing knowledge in the exploration of the Phoenix Nebula.

**A2:** Religion is defined as the *collective faith* of the people. It hangs above the knowledge generation process as a symbol but doesn’t influence the generation process of the astrophysicist. The Rubens engraving of Loyola lying above the actual scientific tool used for generating knowledge, the spectrometer, is an example of how religion remains above in the generation process.

**A3:** The knowledge which aids the generation process of the astrophysicist is also *purely scientific*. The entire exploration process, from comparisons they draw of the planets in the Phoenix Nebula with the ones in our solar system to the methods they use to break open the fused rock, are all based on science, with no affiliations to religious ideas.

**H2:** So, in “The Star,” we have science producing unbiased facts in the process of knowledge generation. Religion is entirely separate and doesn’t influence the knowledge generation whatsoever.

**H1:** That’s an interesting outlook. Let’s see what the panelists discussing “The Hammer of God” have to say about the interplay of science and religion in the process of generating knowledge.

**B1:** The Hammer of God defines Science as the method of inquiry and observation that seeks to answer questions in the Here and Now. The main purpose of all the knowledge generated by science is solely to answer the various questions that arise in the course of solving the mystery.

**B2:** Agreed! In fact, Science answers the *how* aspect of the mystery. The scientific impossibility that a human could have crushed a man’s head to the given extent hinted at some other force in play. This other force turns out to be gravity, which is a scientific natural force.

**B3:** Religion is defined as a set of beliefs that provide a moral framework for individuals to live their lives. Across the story, religion helps in answering the *why* aspect of the mystery. Father Brown takes the aid of religion to walk through, what would’ve gone through, Wilfred’s head before committing the crime and *why* he did what he did; **something snapped in his soul, and he’d let God’s thunderbolt fall**. Moreover, religion generated knowledge of the ‘*why*’ throughout the conversation between Father Brown and Wilfred on top of the church.

**H1:** So, in “The Hammer of God,” we have both science and religion working simultaneously to answer the “How” and “Why” questions of knowledge generation.

**H2:** ‘The Star’ doesn’t involve religion playing a generative cause of knowledge. So, what exactly matters in religion? Where does it place with respect to the generation process? Let’s ask our panel!

**A1:** Human interests are what matters in religion. It forms the *core of religion*, and it is built with the faith of the people. Faith upholds the interest of people, which lies in a prolonged prosperous civilization, and values it more than anything else. Religion, in the name of God, provides people a ground to rely upon and sets up people with similar beliefs together.

**A2:** True! The destruction of the flourishing civilization sparked a sense of despair because they could no longer rely on the mercy of God for their interests. This added with the fact that the civilization didn’t perish due to its own failure made the astrophysicist explore more of the civilisation instead of his intended knowledge generation process.

**A3:** Yes. Not only are these human interests given precedence over other knowledge generations, but they also target facts generated through science to protect itself. Religion serves as a *barrier* that goes to great lengths to tamper with the facts just to prioritize human interests. This is evident when the Jesuit priest acknowledges how his order has tampered with the truth in the past to achieve their means.

**H2:** So, we have human interests as the core of religion. Some facts generated through scientific means directly target the core of religion, which affects the faith of people. Thus, religion strives to protect human interests, which may even mean concealing these facts.

**H1:** Damn, that’s a very hostile situation between science and religion. I wonder what’s the relation between science and religion in “The Hammer of God.”

**B1:** Both Father Brown and the Doctor had a scientific approach to viewing facts and drawing conclusions from them. They have a scientific viewpoint and consider the various facts and observations before arriving at their deductions.

**B2:** Exactly! The doctor scientifically validated or invalidated the various possibilities that were proposed by the people. Similarly, Father Brown was very keen on the facts and wasn’t focusing on the various impossibilities proposed. For e.g., When the police inspector was amidst arresting the blacksmith, only Father Brown was keenly focused on the small hammer.

**B3:** However, Father Brown, a religious priest, who’d have heard countless confessions in his profession and thus had the experiential knowledge of what a person feels or what was going through his head. This drew his attention to Wilfred, which finally helped him solve the mystery.

**H1:** So basically, both science and religion are necessities to arrive at a conclusion. Science cannot function in isolation since the doctor wasn’t able to arrive at the facts with his Science Only background.

**H2:** That’s interesting. I wonder how ‘The Star’ details the relationship between science and religion in terms of the knowledge generated.

**A1:** We see that narrator is worried about the effect of scientific discovery on the *faith* of people in their religion. He says that even accepting God as supreme power whose actions cannot be questioned is not enough to justify the destruction caused on this planet in his presence. This would cause people to lose faith in the religion.

**A2:** The Jesuit priest's statement, "It can end much more than that," implies that this knowledge could have *far-reaching consequences*, as people may come to the realization that they are on their own and that He does not care about them. This brings out a feeling of fear and betrayal in the religious setting.

**A3:** These facts do falter the priest's beliefs, but it strengthens the ancient legend of the star of Bethlehem. Priest proved that it was no fiction and that the supernova that engulfed this civilization was responsible for the light that shone over Bethlehem.

**A1:** In a way, the knowledge generated both *falters the belief* in God's actions and also *strengthens the legend* associated with the birth of Jesus.

**H2:** Basically, Science is not only exclusively responsible for knowledge generation but also attacks one's faith in the religious value system.

**H1:** Talking about religion, The Hammer of God had two very different belief systems originating from the same knowledge system, which is religion.

**B1:** Father Brown prioritizes humility in a man. He mentions: "*Heights were made to be looked at, not to be looked from.*" He believes that God is the entity that created humans, and as humans, we aren't supposed to put ourselves on top of the heights and look down upon others.

**B2:** Wilfred, on the other hand, believed that he was supposed to carry out God's actions on his behalf. In his prayers, perched on top of the church, where the other humans seemed like small insects, Wilfred took it upon himself to kill a certain 'poisonous green beetle' fuelled by his hatred for the sins that his Brother was committing.

**B3:** Quite true; Father Brown acknowledges that as a human, he has all devils in his heart. He understands that, as a man, it is normal to have impure thoughts/acts that run through one's head. But gives primary focus to the fact that one should KNOW how to categorize these thoughts as right and wrong.

**B1:** Ya, Wilfred's approach to this is quite contrasting. He did not realize that the thoughts running through his head were wrong but felt that it was God's Will that he was supposed to execute. He takes justice into his own hands and executes actions in the name of God's will.

**B2:** On the other hand, Father Brown did not believe a man had power over another man. He believed that a person should himself realize that his thoughts/actions were incorrect. This can be seen when he lets Wilfred off free after he's made sure that Wilfred realizes the gravity of the crime he committed.

**H1:** So both these belief systems are essentially quite apart. But we can see that the text favours Father Brown's belief since Wilfred admitted defeat by confessing after Father Brown talked about his belief system.

**H2:** So, what can we conclude about the position of religion and science in the knowledge generation process? Are they separate entities, or are they intertwined? Both these texts present convincing arguments about their respective cases.

**H1:** Well, that's certainly food for thought.

