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**The Mutually Beneficial Interaction of Science and Religion in Contemporary Society**

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The natural and human sciences are in creative tension with religion, but it is a mistake to consider them to be in essential conflict. In fact, their interaction within society and culture can be, and often is, mutually beneficial, as long as the limitations and strengths of each are acknowledged and respected. This is strongly supported by the history of their relationship, and by the issues and interests connecting the two today. Three examples of this are: 1. the way in which each can reveal the competencies and deficiencies of the other; 2. the deep complementarity between the understanding of the universe we have from Big Bang and quantum cosmology and that resulting from elaborating the best classical philosophical Jewish-Christian-Islamic understandings of creation; and 3. the validation of rational inquiry by physics and cosmology, which provides a platform for exploring beyond where the natural sciences can go – to philosophical and even theological questions. Though the Vatican Observatory is primarily dedicated to scientific research, its history is testimony to this deep and dynamic complementarity.