

JewishTimes

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GOD VS. THE **MULTIVERSE**

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Chabad Violations

Emails to the DEAD

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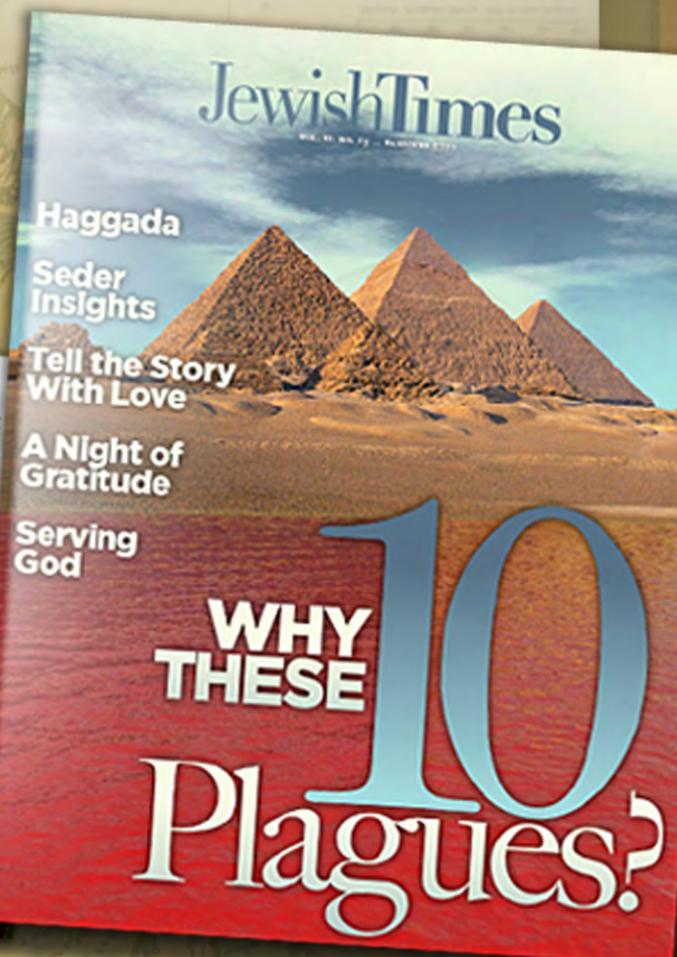
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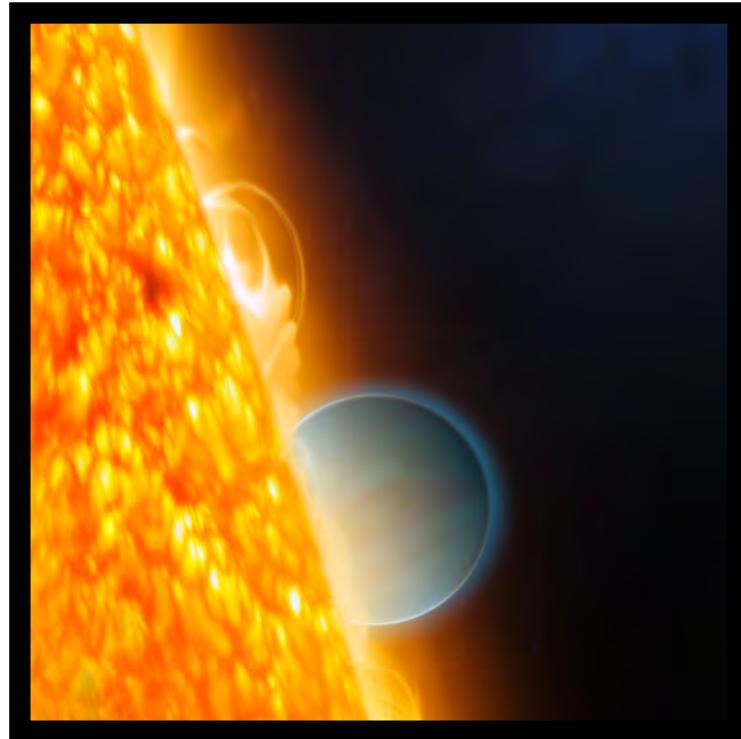
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LETTERS

Follow truth, not people

Reader: Rabbi, I really enjoy your website. I was hoping you could answer a few questions for me. You have articles upholding the Gra's opposition and his Charem with regard to Chassidim. You also have articles that disprove the Zohar, Lurianic Kabbalah and the concept of Gilgul. With this in mind I would like to ask you the following:

Why do you hold by the Gra when he himself held by Zohar, the Ari and Gilgul? He also held by Rav Moshe Chaim Luzatto, a well known kabbalist. Would this not make his authority

suspect in your opinion? What makes him any different than kabbalists that distort the faith of Yisrael? Same with Nachmanides? Thank you, Gavriel

Rabbi: One can agree with a person on a single issue, while rejecting his other statements.

Kabbala accepted by Nachmanides is not identical at all with today's Kabbala, that is heresy. They only share the name, but not the content. I cannot explain why the Gra accepted gilgul, unless he means Tichiyas Hamasim. Or perhaps this is yet another fabrication (like Yoreh Deah 179.)

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REVIEWS



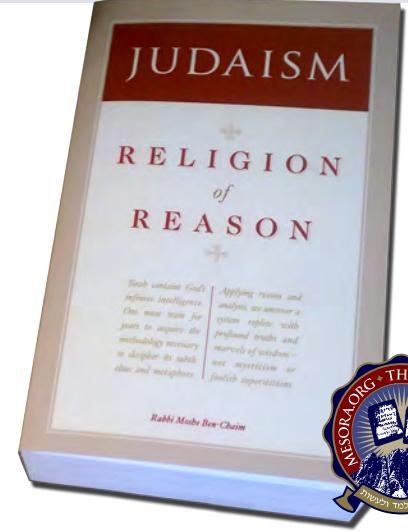
RABBI REUVEN MANN — *Rabbi, Y. Israel of Phoenix*

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim has written extensively on Jewish philosophy for many years. His ideas are rooted in a rational approach. He follows the great philosophers like Rambam and Saadia Gaon. He is opposed to all forms of "mysticism" and seeks to debunk all practices and beliefs which are rooted in superstition and contrary to reason. This work covers a wide variety of topics, of interest to contemporary; insightful analyses of Biblical narratives as well as the significance of many mitzvot. Rabbi Ben-Chaim demonstrates that Judaism can be harmonized with human reason. He is not afraid to ask the most penetrating and challenging questions as he is convinced that Torah is the Word of God and based on the highest form of wisdom. Jews who have a profound desire to make sense out of their religion will benefit greatly from reading this book.



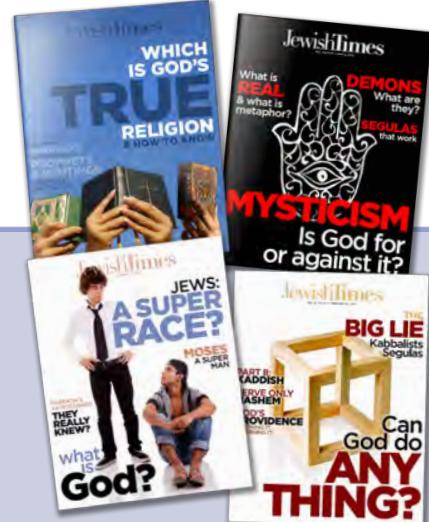
RABBI STEVEN WEIL — *Executive Vice President, The Orthodox Union*

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim asks critical, crucial and defining questions that any thinking Jew needs to ask. His method enables the reader to explore and engage our theology in a meaningful and serious way. Following the Rishonim, he forces us to define, weigh and analyze each phrase of chazal, showing there is no contradiction between an investigation of Science and an investigation of Judaism. Rabbi Ben-Chaim has written a work that addresses the thinking person of all faiths. This work speaks to the scholar and lay person alike and will help you gain insight into how the great Rishonim define how we view the world. Rabbi Ben-Chaim's website, Mesora.org is a very serious tool and resource for thinking human beings who want to engage and explore the Almighty, the Almighty's universe and do so within the realm of wisdom, rationality and intellectual honesty.



RELIGION of REASON

by Jewish Times' publisher
Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim



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Reincarnation	Kabbala
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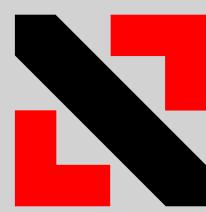
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Part II

The Multiverse

RABBI E. FEDER & RABBI E. ZIMMER

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Science tries to explain things through a process of simplification. This means explaining one thing in terms of something else more basic. Simplification generally means unifying different phenomenon by explaining them in terms of fewer things. For example, Newton's theory of gravity unified the phenomenon of things falling to the ground on Earth, with the phenomenon of planets orbiting the sun. Both things were explained in terms of one principle (gravity) which is more fundamental.

The most basic things are called 'fundamental'. The most basic laws are called the 'fundamental laws of physics'. The concept of 'fundamental' is of utmost importance in science. Science is seeking to explain the most fundamental reality. Science is seeking to explain everything in terms of one (ideally) fundamental theory. This "theory of everything" will be the fundamental law of physics, in the sense that all other laws can be derived from it, but it cannot be explained in terms of anything simpler.

The most basic particles, 'fundamental particles', are those that can combine to make everything else that is more 'complex'. These fundamental particles have intrinsic properties like mass. The more mass something has, the more it weighs. Every single electron in the universe has the exact same amount of mass. We can quantify the amount of mass in an electron by comparing it to any proton. Every proton is always 1,836.15267245

times more massive than any electron. It is constantly that amount. Hence, we call the mass of an electron a 'constant.'

The term 'constant' is used in physics to refer to a particular number that doesn't change, and tells us how big something is. It could be how heavy an electron is, how fast light moves, how strong gravity is, etc. All these things are finite quantities, which have particular, unchanging values that we only know through measurements and observations. These quantities are called constants.

How can science explain the value of the above mentioned constant in terms of something more fundamental? What determines this number? Why isn't it 2000 or 7.6453 or .000001? Why aren't electrons more massive than protons? Can science go any further? How do you explain a number?

Richard Feynman expresses this difficulty in his book QED (page 129), with regard to one of these constants, the fine structure constant (Don't get scared if you don't understand what the fine structure constant is. It's not essential to the proof. Think about the mass of the electron if it is easier to relate to.) :

"There is a most profound and beautiful question associated with the observed coupling constant...It is a simple number that has been experimentally determined to be close to 0.08542455. (My physicist friends won't recognize this number, because they like to



remember it as the inverse of its square: about 137.03597 with about an uncertainty of about 2 in the last decimal place. It has been a mystery ever since it was discovered more than fifty years ago, and all good theoretical physicists put this number up on their wall and worry about it.) Immediately you would like to know where this number for a coupling comes from: is it related to pi or perhaps to the base of natural logarithms? Nobody knows. It's one of the greatest damn mysteries of physics: a magic number that comes to us with no understanding by man. You might say the "hand of God" wrote that number, and "we don't know how He pushed his pencil." We know what kind of a dance to do experimentally to measure this number very

(continued on next page)



accurately, but we don't know what kind of dance to do on the computer to make this number come out, without putting it in secretly!"

What was the mystery that all good theoretical physicists worried about for 50 years?

In our current conception of the fundamental laws of physics, there are 25 or so physical constants (specific quantities like the mass or charge of an electron), some of which are dimensionless physical constants (a pure number with no units). This is not as abstract a concept as it sounds. It basically just means a ratio between two things with similar units.) One of these dimensionless constants is 0.08542455, which characterizes the strength of the electromagnetic force and is directly related to the charge of an electron. (The bigger the number, the stronger the repulsive force between two electrons would have been.) The essential mystery is not tied to the fine structure constant in particular. It is just one of 25 examples. When Feynman wrote this in 1985, all these constants were shrouded in this tremendous mystery. What sense is there to specific numbers being

fundamental?

In order to understand Feynman's question, you have to realize what he is assuming. He is assuming that a number cannot be fundamental. This is because it makes very little sense to say that the most basic existences in reality are 25 arbitrary numbers. What Feynman is asking is that if these numbers are not fundamental, how can science possibly explain these constants in terms of something more fundamental?

An appreciation of this problem is necessary before we can move forward in the story. Specific fundamental numerical values seem to defy any possible form of explanation. It doesn't seem reasonable to believe that any qualitative physical theory will ever spit out a number like 137.03597 (and some of the other numbers are even worse). They seem totally arbitrary. (It would be a different story if the numbers we were trying to produce were 1, 3, or the square root of 2 pi; if it were numbers like these, maybe we could stand a chance at deriving them from some qualitative concept. For instance, if it involved pi, we would look for a qualitative law involving circles...) This was one of the biggest difficulties in modern physics. We had absolutely no understanding about these fundamental constants, yet they were essential parts of our equations.

Two solutions were proposed (and still are by a minority of scientists) to try to explain where these

arbitrary numbers came from. The first theory simply stated that these 25 numbers were Necessary Existences (this is the theory Feynman is implicitly rejecting). Needless to say, this did not satisfy most physicists. While it is obvious that you will ultimately arrive at an idea which is irreducible and not explainable in terms of simpler concepts, it is one thing when your axiomatic ideas are nice theories such as general relativity and quantum mechanics (or maybe a grand unified theory if you prefer one eternal existence); it is altogether a different thing to have a pantheon filled by general relativity, quantum mechanics, and 25 arbitrary numbers, all necessarily coexisting.

A second theory speculated that perhaps these 25 numbers were necessary results of some qualitative Master Mathematical Equation that had yet to be discovered. This too did not satisfy most physicists as it does not seem plausible that any qualitative law would naturally generate the specificity of numbers required by observation.

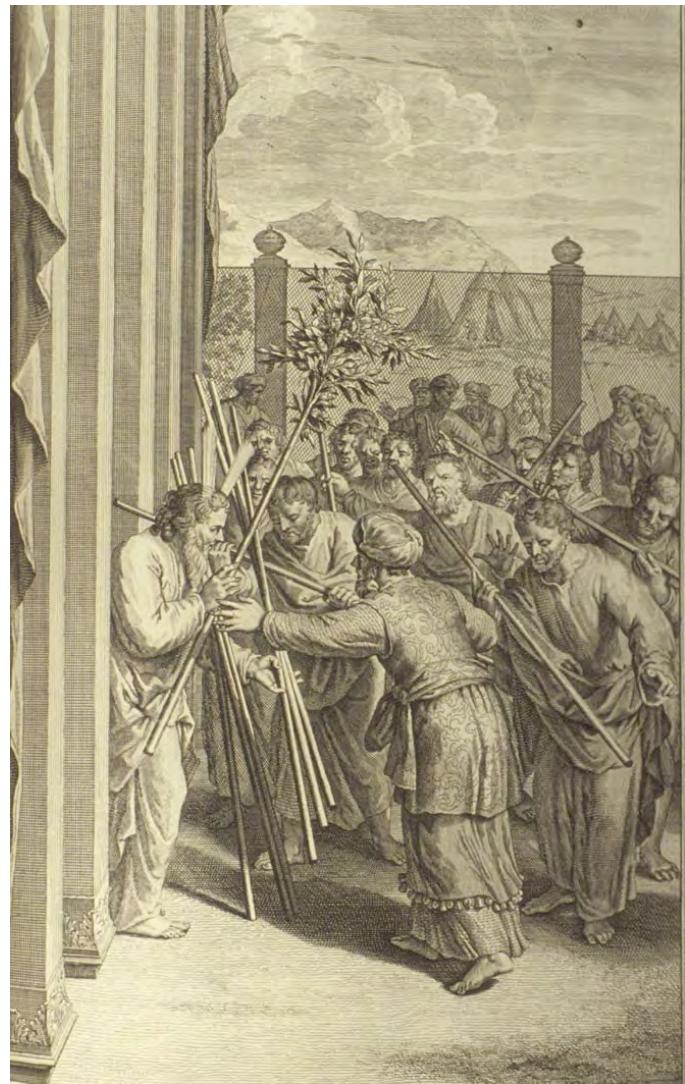
There was a general state of discontent with these forced explanations as they did not provide very much understanding or insight into the values of the constants. What could possibly have determined these numbers? Or, if nothing determined them, how could an arbitrary number be a fundamental part of reality?

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RABBI BERNIE FOX

KORACH: The Torah's Expectations of its Leaders

"And they gathered against Moshe and Aharon and they said to them: You have enough! For all of the nation – every member – are sacred and Hashem is among them. Why have you lifted yourselves above the congregation of Hashem?" (Sefer BeMidbar 16:3)



1. Korach's true objective

Parshat Korach describes a rebellion initiated and led by Korach against Moshe. The Torah provides conflicting indications as to the issue that was the subject of the dispute. In the above passage Korach protests that every member of the nation is sacred. Therefore, it is not appropriate for Moshe to assume the role of leader. Apparently, Korach was proposing some form of egalitarian, collective leadership in which every member of the nation would participate.

Moshe responds to Korach with a rebuke. However, he does not address Korach's criticism. Instead, he rebukes Korach for pursuing power and authority. He says that, as a member of the Tribe of Leyve, Korach has been provided with a special sanctity and a degree of prestige. Korach should be satisfied with this appointment and not seek further honor and prestige. It is apparent from Moshe's rebuke, that he suspected Korach's democratic pronouncements were designed to enlist the support of the nation. He was hiding his true desire within a message he believed would resonate with the people and secure their sympathy.

Rashi quotes our Sages who explain that Moshe

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correctly interpreted Korach's motives. Korach observed that Moshe had assumed the position of ruler and Aharon had been appointed by Moshe as Kohen Gadol – High Priest. He expected – based upon his place within the lineage of his family – to be appointed as its leader. Instead, Moshe selected Eli'zafan for this post. This infuriated Korach and resulted in Korach developing and launching a conspiracy whose aim was to unseat Moshe.

With the assistance of Rashi's comments a clear image emerges of Korach's true objectives and character. Korach combined two qualities. First, he was ambitious and eager to achieve authority, power, and honor. In other words, he wished to dominate others and be glorified. Second, he was an astute, shrewd but cynical student of human nature. He understood the human desire to be free from the demands of authority and the appeal of an egalitarian political system. He used his understanding of human nature to further his own personal ends.

2. Modern parallels to Korach's rebellion

Korach's strategy has many modern parallels. One example is the strategy employed by Lenin and the communist leadership to overthrow the Tzar and seize power. Lenin preached an extreme egalitarian approach to government and economics. He promised that political and economic power and influence would lie with the people. He enlisted the population in his campaign to overthrow a despotic dictator. However, when victorious, Lenin introduced his own version of dictatorship. Although he described it as the dictatorship of the proletariat, it was not markedly different from the dictatorship of the Romanov aristocracy which it replaced. Countless other revolutions have followed the same path. These include the overthrow of the Shah in order to replace him with Iran's current theocracy, and the overthrow of Rhodesia's minority white

leadership to be replaced by Robert Mugabe's ruthless dictatorship of Zimbabwe. Korach and these other rulers shared the realization that the fundamental desire for freedom can be manipulated by the unscrupulous leader in order to further his own end and even to ascend to absolute power over his followers.

Raban Gamliel the son of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince says, ".... All that toil on behalf of the community should toil for them for the sake of heaven. Then, the merit of their fathers will support them and their righteousness will stand for eternity." (Tractate Avot 2:2)

3. Two archetypes of leadership

In the above mishne Raban Gamliel extols the virtue of serving one's community. However, he stipulates that one's efforts on behalf of the community must be for the sake of heaven. Raban Gamliel explains that if a person serves the community for the sake of heaven, then the "merits of their fathers" will sustain these efforts and contribute to their success.

The exact meaning of Raban Gamliel's message is not clear. Whose fathers' merits will sustain the community worker and leader? Is it possible to understand how these merits will sustain the worker's efforts?

Rabbaynu Ovadia Bertinoro offers a rather simple and straightforward explanation of Raban Gamliel's comments. He explains that the "fathers" to whom Raban Gamliel refers are the righteous individuals of previous generations. Based on this interpretation, he explains Raban Gamliel's message.

There are two archetypes of community leaders. One type of community leader is primarily focused on their own self-promotion. The efforts and accomplishments of such leaders have no essential connection to one another. Each leader's main objective is self-glorification. If one continues his predecessor's work this is because he views this strategy as an expedient for securing his own recognition. However, on a more fundamental level each worked solely for the purpose of securing his own legacy. Continuity of leadership only occurs on a fundamental level among the second type of leaders. These are leaders who share a single great purpose and end.

This is Raban Gamliel's message. A leader who works for the sake of heaven – in order to advance the community's spiritual life – continues the work of countless generations of righteous ancestors. This leader is linked with a past extending into remote history. He is furthering a mission and vision that was shared by those who preceded him and will be continued by those who will follow.

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4. Leadership built upon the merit of previous generations

Because they labored for the sake of heaven, the true leaders of previous generations accrued merit. Raban Gamliel asserts that one of the rewards for their merit is that their efforts will not be fruitless and their zeal for their mission will not be in vain. Other leaders will replace them and continue their work. These new leaders – if authentic in their motives – will be sustained by Hashem. This is a reward to the generations of devoted leaders whose mission the new leader continues.

5. A fundamental difference between serving the community and other mitzvot

Raban Gamliel's exhortation seems to contradict another dictum of the Sages. The Sages assert that, of course, it is best to perform commandments for the proper reason. However, even when the commandment is executed for personal reasons, it has value. By habituating oneself in the performance of the commandment one will hopefully elevate oneself to performing the commandment for its proper purpose. It seems that Raban Gamliel does not apply this reasoning to leadership. A leader should lead and toil on behalf of the community only for the sake of heaven. Raban Gamliel does not seem to believe that even a self-centered leader who toils for the community in order to secure acknowledgment and recognition is acceptable because with time and experience he may evolve into a more ideal leader.

Once he (Avraham) recognized and knew he began to respond to the people of Ur Kasdim and to debate them. He said that you do not travel of the road of truth. He broke the idols and began to make known to the nation that it is only appropriate to serve the Lord of the universe. To Him it is appropriate to prostrate oneself, offer sacrifices and libations so that all future generations will recognize him. (Maimonides, Laws of Idolatry 1:3)

6. What commandment does the leader fulfill through his efforts?

One possible explanation for Raban Gamliel's exclusion of leaders and commu-

nity workers from the principle of the Sages is suggested by the above comments of Maimonides. There is no specific mitzvah in the Torah that commands a person to work on behalf of the community or assume the role of a leader. However in the above excerpt from Maimonides' biographical sketch of Avraham, he describes Avraham's emergence as a leader and teacher of humanity. This raises an interesting issue. What compelled Avraham to assume this role? Why was Avraham determined to teach the truth to others and reform humanity from its idolatrous practices? If Avraham's motivations can be defined, then perhaps we can identify the mitzvah that latter-era leaders fulfill.

It seems reasonable to assume that Avraham was motivated by his love of Hashem. This love was so intense that he felt compelled to share with others his discovery of Hashem and to draw them toward His service and worship. This conclusion also suggests that the commandment that compels latter-era leaders to assume the burden of community leadership is the commandment to love Hashem.

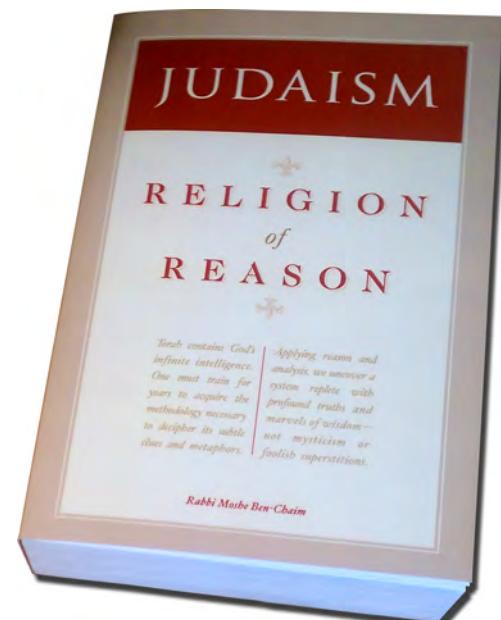
7. The self-serving leader does not fulfill any commandment

Now Raban Gamliel's position makes sense. When a person performs a typical commandment, even if the person's motives are less than ideal, the commandment is fulfilled. For example, if a person performs the commandment of dwelling in a succah on Succot because he enjoys spending time outdoors, the perimeters of the commandment are met and the mitzvah is fulfilled. In other words, whether the person dwelled in the succah because he wished to fulfill the Torah commandment or because he enjoys the outdoors, he has dwelled in the succah. The act required by the mitzvah has been performed and thereby the commandment fulfilled. It makes sense to encourage the person to perform the commandment for even a personal motive. He will become accustomed to performing the mitzvah and hopefully, in time, his motives will become more ideal.

This reasoning does not apply to the

commandment to love Hashem. The mitzvah of love of Hashem is fulfilled consequential to one's encounter with the Creator. It is a response to this encounter. The mitzvah is not, in-essence, a performance. It is an experience of adoration and devotion. Love is – by its very definition – a selfless experience. True love requires selfless devotion to the object of one's adoration. Self-interest and true love are antithetical to one another. Therefore, the mitzvah is not even subject to fulfillment in response to a personal motive.

As Avraham demonstrated, authentic leadership is an expression of and derives its legitimacy from the commandment of love of Hashem. Therefore, leadership is only the fulfillment of this commandment when it is motivated by and is a pure expression of this love. If one leads for personal advantage and gain, no Torah commandment is fulfilled through the leadership. ■



The Torah Prohibition of Consulting the Dead (pg 208)

Self AWARENESS

Rabbi Reuven Mann

One of the great qualities of the Torah is its complete honesty. It does not pretend that there is such a thing as a “perfect” person who never sins. Thus it reports the failings of even the greatest people. Miriam and Aaron did not escape Hashem’s anger for their unwarranted criticism of Moshe. The spies were righteous men of great distinction and yet committed one of the worst sins recorded in the Torah. There is a sobering lesson that we can learn from this. No one, no matter how spiritually elevated, is immune from sin. This idea is expressed in the statement of the Rabbis, “Do not believe in yourself until the day you die.” This means that one should not develop a feeling of confidence in his ability to withstand the temptations that inevitably confront us in our journey through life. The Rabbis also say “Fortunate is the person who worries constantly.” This does not mean that one should always be in a state of neurotic anxiety. Rather it means he should avoid complacency, be cognizant of his weaknesses and always strive to avoid dangerous pitfalls.

This week’s parsha, Korach, recounts the story of a rebellion which threatened to destroy the fiber of Klal Yisrael. Korach, a relative of Moshe accused him of being a corrupt lender who sought to amass power by taking the Kingship for himself and assigning the priesthood to his brother Aaron. Originally the privilege of performing the service in the Beit Hamikdosh was given to the Bechorim (first born). However, as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf Hashem took it away from them and gave it to Aaron and his descendants while the work of assisting them was allocated to the Levites.

Korach was personally offended by his exclusion from the priesthood. He sought to undo the appointments of Moshe by instigating a popular uprising. He presented himself as the enemy of special privilege and the champion of democracy. His slogan was, “The entire congregation is holy and G-d is among them and why do you

glorify yourself over the Congregation of Hashem?” On the surface his words were inspiring and appealing. Indeed, they resonated with many others who joined in his revolt. What was his problem? He was convinced by his own rhetoric that he truly was a champion of “equality.” He was guilty of believing in his own earnestness and righteousness. He could not look within and see the true source of his contention with Moshe. He harbored a desire for power and was severely disappointed when he didn’t get the prize. Moshe tried to help him by pointing this out to him. He said, “Is it not enough that Hashem separated you from the congregation of Israel to perform the service in the mishkan...and you seek also the priesthood?” We must never be misled by our own sense of righteousness. We should resist the temptation to come to conclusions about other peoples’ motives based purely on appearances, no matter how compelling. We must always be suspicious of our own motives and have the courage to look within and acknowledge our baseness and perverseness. Self awareness is a vital element in protecting us from actions and accusations which lead to unnecessary contention and sinat chinam. Let us always seek to judge our fellows on the side of merit. Shabbat Shalom. ■



Praying to the Dead: Part II

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Due to the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Yahrtzeit this weekend, Chabad.org sent a mass email urging the public to submit letters to the dead Rebbe. The email included this statement:

"...it is also customary to send written notes to the Rebbe's resting place for intercession On High for blessings."

One person shared her concern, questioning whether this was a valid Torah practice. To answer this and any question, one must adhere to reason and intelligence. Despite the masses and even Rabbis who might follow a given practice, what is "true", and what is "Torah", is determined by reality and authentic sources respectively. We have no concern for what many people might do, if a practice violates reason and Torah. Reputations are equally irrelevant. Therefore, we do not say, "Since a Rabbi did such and such, it must be correct."

King Solomon wrote, "*the dead know nothing (Koheles 9:5)*". Applied here, Rava's principle of "*Ain mikra yotzai miday pshuto*" ("A verse cannot be explained against its plain reading [Yevamos 24a]") plainly teaches that the dead are not aware of the world of the living; "*the dead know nothing.*" Sforno comments that the dead have no natural forces. This includes hearing. Thus, praying to the dead is useless.

But even before King Solomon wrote his prophetic words, God clearly prohibited consulting the dead:

"A Chover, one who asks of the Ove and the Yedoni, and one who inquires of the dead...for an abomination to God is one who does all these... (Deut. 18:11,12)."

These practices are "abominations", as they assume powers to exist, or capabilities within the deceased, that are not evidenced. Whereas God wishes man to use the senses He gifted us, to deny our God-given senses, means to deny God's will. This is an abomination to God. We essentially reject God when we ignore the precious tools He granted us and mandated we employ to determine both; what is true, and what is bereft of proof.

We are then struck by two Talmudic sources that appear to validate praying to the dead:

Taanis 15a cites the custom to visit the cemeteries on Tisha B'Av, "*so the dead might request mercy for us.*"

Sotah 34b: "*The verse (Numbers 13:22) states: "And they ascended in the south, and he arrived at Hebron." It should have said, "and THEY arrived at Hebron!" Rava said, This teaches us that Calev disassociated himself from the designs of the spies, and went alone to Hebron and prostrated himself at the graves of the Patriarchs. He said to them: "My fathers, ask for mercy upon me that I may be saved from the designs of the spies!"*

In light of God's prohibition and King Solomon's words, these quotes are indeed perplexing. But we must understand that Talmud is not a history book. Such quotes intend to unveil ideas and values and many times are not literal.

Rabbeinu Nissim (Taanis, Rif 5b, 2 lines from the bottom) says that when visiting a cemetery, Jews would cry. Evidently, accepting death as a reality in this fashion moves people to greater repentance so as to avoid punishment, when they die. Rabbeinu Nissim ads, "But they would not take the podium and the Torah there to pray (certainly not to gentile cemeteries) God forbid." He states, they did not pray at cemeteries. Therefore, the Talmud's words, "so the dead might request mercy for us" must be interpreted. This means that visiting the dead benefits us, just like prayer does. But the benefit is through our own perfection, not any act of the dead, who in fact can do nothing and hear nothing. In truth, the dead are not "there" in the cemeteries. When we see graves, our mortality is no longer deniable. We face our limited lifespans, and ponder our sins for which we all must answer to God in the end. This moves us to repentance. This is the benefit of visiting the dead..."as if" the dead did something for us.

Calev too visited the dead, but only specific dead personalities: the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. As he felt the pull of the Spies' evil council, he wisely sought to bolster his conviction in God's promise of the Land. That promise was made to the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. Calev assessed himself well, and knew he would find emotional strength to withstand the Spies, if he visited the graves of those Patriarchs and Matriarchs. This would give his ideals greater reality, and grant him courage when speaking out to defend God's word, "We are surely able" to conquer Israel. But Calev did not pray to the dead. The Talmudic quote "My fathers, ask for mercy upon me..." is Rava's manner of delivering an idea. Rava certainly did not suggest Calev violated God's Torah prohibition of praying to the dead. His meaning here is identical with the explanation we have given for Taanis. Calev benefitted by visiting their graves..."as if" the dead benefitted him somehow. To say the dead benefitted Calev, Rava coined the phrase "My fathers, ask for mercy upon me..."

It would be proper that Chabad leaders who view prayers and notes to the dead as a Torah violation, would finally denounce this practice. Silence on this matter is quite misleading.

I will end with a quote from the Iyyun Tefila (Otsar Tefilos; weekday morning Shmoneh Essray on "Oseh Shalom Bimromav"):

"For we have a great fundamental; it is not fitting to pray to any creation in the world and to request any assistance from it, except from God alone." ■

The Ultimate VALIDATION

RABBI DR. DARRELL GINSBERG



The haftorah of Parshas Korach deals with the coronation of Shaul as the first king of the Jewish people. Their request for a king, as is well known, was met with resistance by Shmuel, as he sensed their desire was impure, and tainted by their insecurities. The bulk of the haftorah contains a deep and insightful speech to the Jewish people detailing how they should approach the Jewish king. When looking at his opening remarks, we see an almost defiant Shmuel, insisting he never gained any personal benefit throughout all his endeavors on behalf of the Jewish people. And in an amazing display of validation, according to the Talmud, a Divine voice confirms that Shmuel was telling the truth. As we will soon see, this speech and its Divine endorsement served an important purpose in the development of the idea of the Jewish king.

Shmuel's introduction went as follows (Shmuel I 12:3-5):

"Here I am; witness against me before the LORD, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose donkey have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? or whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you." And they said: 'Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.' And he said unto them: 'The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand.' And they said: 'He is witness.'

The reference to taking any personal benefit is of the same character as Moshe's statement to God during the rebellion of Korach (see Bamidbar 16:15). However, in that situation, the people were openly questioning Moshe's leadership. What was the purpose of Shmuel's insistence to the nation, at this particular moment, that he did not gain anything personal from his years as judge?

The use of "witness" here is interesting as well, and the Talmud jumps on its inclusion by Shmuel (Makos 23b). The Talmud explains that a holy spirit (ruach hakodesh) manifested itself to three tribunals (beis din - the particular use of tribunal is not the subject of this article) - Yehuda, Shmuel, and Shlomo Hamelech. The first of these is referencing the story with Tamar and Yehuda, where Yehuda was faced with the evidence that indicated Tamar was the woman who seduced him. He responds with the famous "she is righteous, it is from me (tzodka mimeni)" statement. The Talmud asks how he could be so sure Tamar was pregnant with his child. Thus, a Divine voice came forth and announced that indeed Yehuda was accurate. With regards to the tribunal of Shmuel, as we mentioned above, Shmuel says that God should be a witness as to his claim of never taking any personal benefit from the Jewish people during his "job" as judge. The Talmud explains that a Divine voice backed up Shmuel's claim, the "witness" referred to in the text. Finally, there is the Tribunal of Solomon. This is referring to the famous story of the two women arguing over which was the mother of a child, and with Shlomo HaMelech then offering the famous "split the baby into two" solution. The reaction of the women indicated to Shlomo which of the two women was indeed the mother. Yet how did he know for sure? Once again, the Divine voice arrives to back up his claim.

This is a difficult Aggadic piece to understand, and, due to lack of space, we will limit ourselves to just a few of the issues. What is the common link between these three stories? Why only in these

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three instances does the Divine voice emerge? And for what purpose? Merely to give a true "rock solid" guarantee? What is the ultimate objective here?

On the surface, one can see a common link between Yehuda and Shlomo Hamelech. Rashi offers a more detailed explanation as to the importance of the Divine voice with the incident by Yehuda. Yehuda was the king, and Tamar had the privilege of the future kings of Israel emerging through her. As such, it was imperative her two sons be traced back to her. Rashi offers another possibility along these lines, where Dovid Hamelech and the Mashiach will emerge from this lineage; therefore, it was imperative Yehuda's claim be backed up. At the very least, we see a link here between two kings - Yehuda and Shlomo. However, where does Shmuel fit into this? Granted, Shmuel was expressing his lack of personal gain from the nation prior to launching into the introduction of Shaul as king. Yet Shmuel was not a king himself, thereby negating this common theme of kingship.

Let's not stray too far from the theme of kingship, as it must play a role in understanding this piece. If we can develop an explanation for Shmuel's adamant denial of any personal benefit from his work as judge, we may be able to extend the idea to both Yehuda and Shlomo.

Shmuel's speech to the nation regarding the coronation of Shaul was of considerable significance, punctuated with the following verses (*ibid* 14:15):

"If ye will fear the LORD, and serve Him, and hearken unto His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of the LORD your God--; but if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, and against your fathers."

The people must relate to the Jewish king in the proper way, with the fear of God the underlying concept. This is not a simple act, as the relationship between the nation and the Jewish king is potentially dangerous. On the one hand, they must be able to place their security in God above all, avoiding the deification of this individual. At the same time, the king was not to be viewed as merely a political figure, someone who was power hungry. As a friend put it succinctly, the king of the Jewish people should reflect the ideas of God, mirroring the attributes God manifested to the world, striving to act in line with truth. He is the "face" of the nation, leading them not just in the wars of God, but to a higher plane of perfection. Any impediment in the relationship of the nation to the king would destroy the bond.

With this mindset, Shmuel recognizes how crucial it had to be that when warning the nation of the perils involved in having a king, he was acting in a purely objective manner. Rather than view this as an adamant denial, it was an introduction demonstrating his true objectivity. He had nothing personal to gain in describing the possible pitfalls in the coronation of Shaul. Had the people perceived a potential power play or an envious judge, his words would fall on deaf ears. This could be the impetus for the Divine voice. At this moment in time, the institution of kingship was being actualized, the first time the Jewish people would be led by a Jewish king. It was therefore critical they know without question his words were authentic.

With this idea in place, we can turn to both Yehuda and Shlomo. In both cases, we are dealing with decisive moments in the Jewish people's perception of the Jewish king. The lineage of kingship was to come from Yehuda. Yet, as we know from the story of the

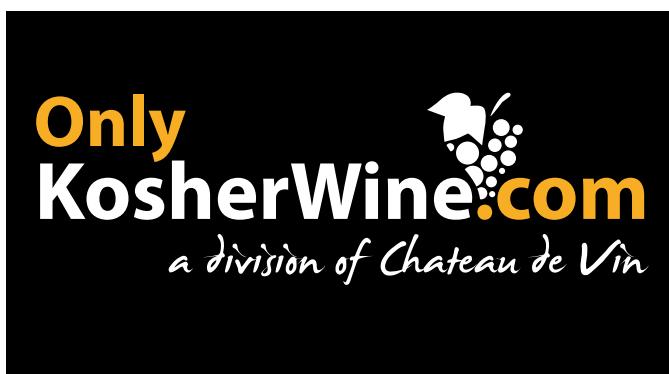
selling of Yosef, Yehuda went into an exile of sorts to reflect on his errors and correct his defects. The climax of the story with Tamar occurs at the moment he is presented with evidence indicating Tamar was the woman he had relations with. The popular sentiment was against Tamar, (the suspicion of her harlotry). And had Yehuda gone along with the will of the masses (as he did earlier with his brothers), nobody would have criticized him. Instead, Yehuda followed truth, attesting to Tamar's righteousness and her desire to establish Yehuda's lineage through deception and sleeping with Yehuda. Yehuda trusted his judgment, forgoing the ego satisfaction derived from loyal followers. He brought forth one of the most important personality traits of any king - he must follow truth, and remain the ultimate reflection of God. At that moment, the idea of the Jewish king was established. Had the Divine voice not intervened, the confidence exhibited by Yehuda may have lost its effect, and doubts would emerge. The Divine voice indicated that Yehuda's claim was authoritative, and therefore the idea of the Jewish king's subservience to truth was unquestioned.

This leads us to Shlomo Hamelech. The reaction of the people to Shlomo's decision actually helps us understand how the Divine voice was of great importance (*Kings I* 3:28):

"And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king; for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do justice."

With this famous case, Shlomo exhibited a unique wisdom, demonstrating an intuition that guided him to truth. Chronologically, it was his first public display of kingship since taking the throne. And in this first instance, he demonstrated as clearly as possible his attachment to chachma, wisdom. Shlomo Hamelech (at the onset of his reign) was the paradigm of Jewish kings, the example that set the standard. This decision would seem to have pervasive ramifications, as noted in the reaction by the Jewish people. It was therefore imperative that no question emerge as to Shlomo's intuitive ability, and that he was clearly reflecting the values of God. Thus, the Divine voice.

There is tremendous more that can be developed concerning this piece in the Talmud, and the normal constraints of this format prevent further exploration. Regardless, one theme emerges from all this. We see pivotal moments in the development of the Jewish king, and how God maintained that it was of utmost importance that the Jewish people relate to the idea of the Jewish king without any impediment whatsoever. From the creation of the kingship through Yehuda, through its first application via Shaul's coronation, to the paradigm demonstration via Shlomo, we see God ensuring that, as much as possible, the Jewish people recognize how truth is the ultimate guiding force in the actions of the Jewish king. ■



Part III: The Solution

The major breakthrough in our understanding of the constants became widespread in 1986 with the publication of Barrow and Tippler's landmark book called the The Anthropic Cosmological Principle. In it, they explained the constants using the strong anthropic principle. (It comes in a weak form and a strong form, as well as many other misused forms. Different authors use it in different ways, which has led to much confusion. The key thing is not the labels, but rather an understanding of the different logical arguments employed. See the Hawking article from the introduction for a specific example.)

The significant advance in our knowledge was the recognition that the constants were not arbitrary. Rather, the constants were fine tuned in a way that only these specific values, within a very small range of variation, result in a universe with order, structure, complex life, etc. Even slightly different values of the constants would lead to a random, chaotic, meaningless universe.

Some particular examples, among many, deal with stars. Stars produce energy by fusing two hydrogen atoms into a single helium atom. During that reaction, 0.007 percent of the mass of the hydrogen atoms is converted into energy. If the percentage were 0.006, the universe would be filled only with hydrogen. If it was 0.008, the universe would have no hydrogen, and therefore no water and no stars like the sun.

Another example is the fine tuning

of the fine structure constant of the previous post. Barrow showed that if the constant was greater or smaller by 4%, the nuclear fusion in stars would not produce carbon, thereby making carbon-based life impossible. (Max Born was actually the first physicist to recognize the key role this constant played in determining atomic structure in 1935 when he gave a lecture called The Mysterious Number 137. It was only after 1986 however, that this type of explanation for many of the constants became widely understood.)

One of the deeper ways to look at it is, if the fundamental laws of physics stayed the same but the values for different constants changed, we would still have physics but we wouldn't have cosmology, astronomy, chemistry, or biology. Change one number, and right after the big bang the universe either collapses in on itself or blows up too quickly to produce galaxies. Change a different constant and stars don't form. Change a different number and there are no atoms or the periodic table. Change another one and life never evolves. Yet all the constants are perfectly fine tuned just right so we have these complex phenomenon, and areas of beauty and wisdom in addition to physics.

It is important to realize how this teleological explanation (the strong anthropic principle) removes the difficulty presented by Feynman in the prior post. The mystery of the constants was how seemingly arbitrary numbers could be fundamental. What was discovered was

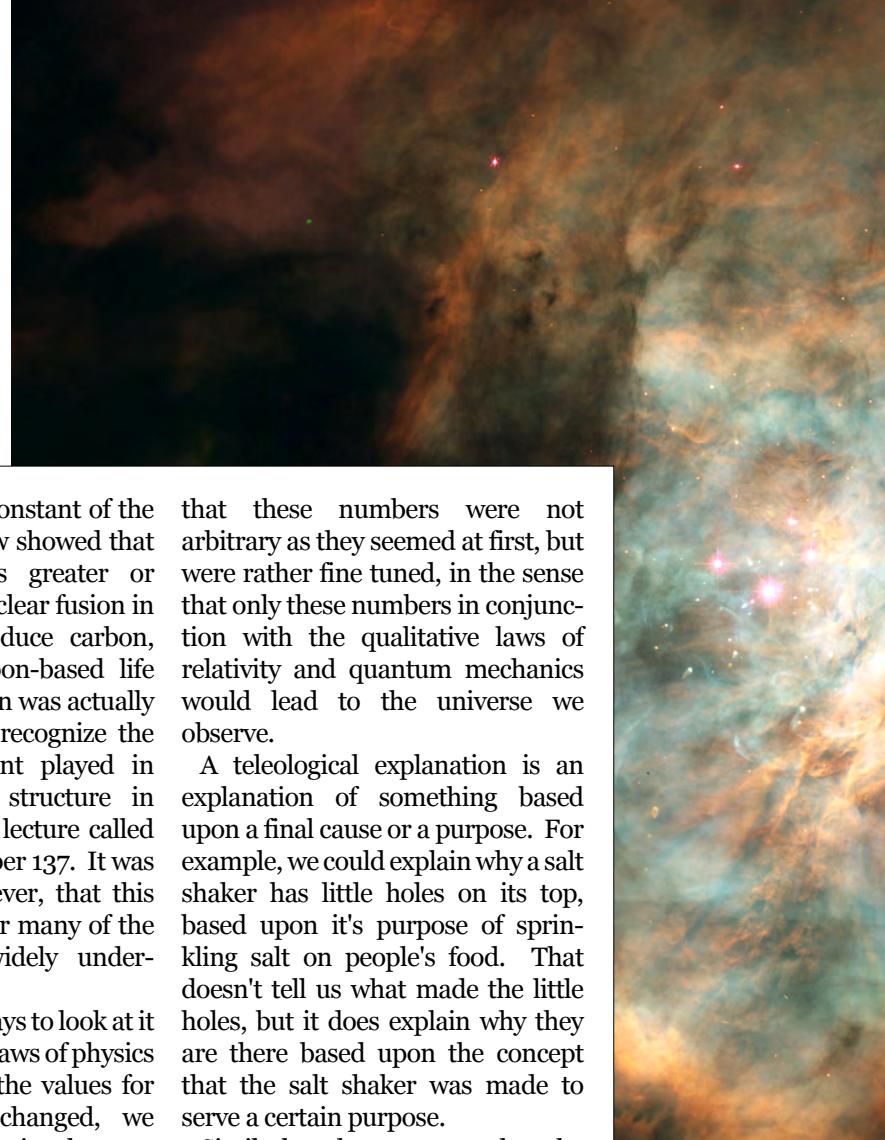
that these numbers were not arbitrary as they seemed at first, but were rather fine tuned, in the sense that only these numbers in conjunction with the qualitative laws of relativity and quantum mechanics would lead to the universe we observe.

A teleological explanation is an explanation of something based upon a final cause or a purpose. For example, we could explain why a salt shaker has little holes on its top, based upon its purpose of sprinkling salt on people's food. That doesn't tell us what made the little holes, but it does explain why they are there based upon the concept that the salt shaker was made to serve a certain purpose.

Similarly, the reason why the constants and the laws are designed the way they are, is in order for the universe to result from them. Were they to be even slightly different, all that would exist would be chaotic nonsense. The particular number for the constants was chosen because the purpose of the laws and constants of physics are to produce a meaningful universe.

This explanation only became possible once science had an understanding of the laws of physics and the critical role that these quantities play in them. Prior to this understanding, it would have been totally speculative to posit any type of teleological explanation.

The solution to the mystery is that the constants are not ultimately fundamental. The Fundamental of



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the 'fundamental constants' is an Intelligent Agent who selected the specific values. It is important to understand why this solution is not beset by the problem of having to determine the values of the constants to the 120th decimal place. The demand to explain every last decimal place is only upon the Master Mathematical Equation theory which speculates that there exists some unique mathematical equation which precisely determines the numbers. A unique equation does not determine a range of values. (In fact, the Necessary Existence theory fails, not because it doesn't explain the number to precision, but because it fails to explain why it's even in the range.)

An Intelligent Agent is able to choose between a range of numbers (i.e. between 130 and 150) all of which yield the same result. We can explain and understand why He didn't choose 129 or 151, because since they are outside the range of values, He wouldn't have accomplished His purpose. Unless we have more knowledge, we can't explain why he picked the exact number 137.03597. If we discover in the future that it mattered more (meaning the range is only 136-138), then we will know why He didn't choose 135. And if it didn't matter which value He chose so long as it was within the range, an Intelligent Agent is capable of choosing one value among many choices that all serve His purpose. (You do it all the time.)

Explaining the constants with a final cause was unacceptable to

many scientists. 'Purpose' is something we attribute to an Intelligent Agent. While most physicists were willing to accept eternal, non-physical, non-intelligent laws as the cause of the universe, they were unable to consider that the cause of the universe was an Intelligent Agent who works with a final cause. An Agent that was able to understand the result of His own actions was simply unacceptable.

Nevertheless, the point was clear. The tie between the fine tuning of the constants and the order in the universe was undeniable. It was incumbent upon scientists to either accept a teleological explanation and the clear inference to an Intelligent Cause, or to explain why the universe seemed like it was designed. The fine tuning directly pointed to an Intelligent Designer, and the burden of proof was on those who denied intelligent design to explain the illusion of design based upon some unintelligent mechanism.

The theories mentioned in the first post, that of the constants being necessary existences and that of the Master Mathematical Equation of the Universe, were no longer sufficient in any sense at all. They were developed when the conceptual problem of the constants was one of arbitrariness. Given our new knowledge of the connection between the values for the constants and the resultant order and complexity in the universe, these theories rapidly fell even further out of favor. It is too coincidental to assume that the values determined

by the hypothesized necessary existences or the Master Mathematical Equation of the Universe happen to be those which result in order and complexity many years later.

To illustrate the point, consider the following hypothetical example. After years of unsuccessfully looking for life on Mars, scientists discover "something" which they cannot quite figure out. After years of analysis of its various parts, they realize that it is a one million year old spaceship which is perfectly suited for travelling on and around Mars. Despite the fact that we have not as of yet found life on Mars, the perfect design of the spaceship is clear evidence that it was designed by some intelligent being (which we would know nothing about, other than the fact that it was intelligent). If someone wanted to deny this and claim that it emerged by random chance or some master mathematical equation that necessitates spaceships on mars, the burden of proof would be on them to develop a compelling theory of how this could have happened.

We have included a short video about the cosmological constant and fine tuning with Leonard Susskind (one of the fathers of string theory and an advocate of the multiverse). The cosmological constant is recognized as one of the most striking examples of fine tuning, and also plays a critical role in big bang cosmology. It is an excellent video that will blow your mind (<http://youtu.be/i4T2Ulv48nw>). ■

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