



The twentieth century saw a vast increase in our knowledge of the universe. Much of this new knowledge was revolutionary in impact; such as relativity, the uncertainty principle, the "Big Bang," new outlooks on evolution and the Anthropic Principle. Much lively debate has resulted among scientists. To many people it seems that science and religion have been drawing much closer to each other during the past century.

Orthodox Jewish scientists should be in the forefront of these debates. My rebbe, Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler *zt"l*, believed in a reconciliation of Torah and science. Some of the essays in *Challenge*, edited by Professor Cyril Domb and myself some twenty-five years ago (and of which a "compact edition" has recently been issued), lay the foundations for this enterprise.

Nosson Slifkin's book, *The Science of Torah*, consists of three parts, and each part in turn consists of three sections. The structure of the book – the first part dealing with "Science," the second with "The Universe," and the third with "Life," – may seem puzzling, but one realizes that the author is following a particular theme of his own. The first two sections of each part are factual, down-to-earth discussions of the present state of Torah and science on the great issues of creation and evolution. The third section in each part sets out the author's own ideas on certain Aggadic and Midrashic material, which the reader may or may not accept, since they are speculative, and, in the author's own words, highly tentative. Some will find these unnecessarily difficult and will therefore prefer to concentrate on the wide-ranging discussion cogently presented in the first two sections of each part. These form a useful introduction, from the Orthodox Jewish viewpoint, to the scientific questions that are the book's main theme.

The author shows convincingly that it is possible to debate these questions within the framework of modern science, while remaining completely loyal to the fundamentals of *emunah*. After all, it is Rambam who delineated for us the parameters of *emunah*, and it is that same Rambam who writes that “what the Torah writes about the works of Bereishis is not all to be taken literally, as believed by the masses” (*Moreh Nevuchim* II:29).

The author wisely does not set out to answer all the questions. But for its scope and depth of treatment I think it is the best book presently available on this subject. I wish him great success and look forward, בע״ה, to seeing the results of his further research in due course.

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