

## Parallel Thinking: An Introduction: In Search of Reality

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Throughout the ages, mankind has grappled to understand the nature of the world. Two distinct disciplines have emerged. These disciplines compete for primacy in our attempts to understand

the reality we inhabit:

Science has been handed down to us by generations of thinkers. These thinkers have contributed to scientific knowledge and to the development of the scientific methods of deriving this knowledge. Science is a field of study that builds and organises knowledge of the Universe in the form of explanations and predictions that can be tested. It is a logical, evidence-based way of understanding our universe.

The other discipline we have received is Torah. In essence, Torah is much more than the five Books of Moshe, which contain laws, as well as stories of our ancestors. Our Sages describe Torah as God's blueprint for creation; it is the crystallisation of the design held in God's mind for the reality He formed. To study Torah is to study the mind of God.

Science and Torah are both valid methods of evaluating the nature of the world, although each method appears to offer wildly different approaches when explaining some of the most fundamental aspects of Creation. Examples of this difference include scientific conclusions about the age of the universe versus the six days of Creation as described in Bereishit, or the Theory of Evolution versus Creation.

In this series, we will grant both disciplines the respect that they deserve from the outset, without prejudice. It seems to me that both are required in understanding the fabric of reality.

We will first explore the concept of belief in God and why Jewish faith in God and the transmission of His Torah has a rational basis. We will then explore the Universe itself by probing concepts such as the age of the Universe, the elementary components of matter and the laws of Physics. We will then turn our attention to the formation of life on Earth and the evolutionary process, before looking at mankind's experience of the world through free will and consciousness. We will conclude with an analysis of the educational challenges which are generated by the apparent conflicts between Science and Torah.

This is not merely an attempt to resolve conflicts. Through an analysis of the differences between Science and Torah, our appreciation and understanding of each discipline will be enhanced. We will reveal the exquisite beauty of both disciplines in their own right, while appreciating the synergy between them.

The next article will review the rational basis for faith in God. We will view God's revelation and the giving of the Torah at Sinai as a beginning of a process of transferring information.

