

Parallel Thinking Part 2: Information and Rational Faith

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The fifteenth century Spanish Rabbi, Yosef Albo, wrote that the basic axioms of Judaism are not based on deductive reasoning or belief, but are validated through direct experience. Spiritual realities are too important to leave to faith alone.

mark on those present. If the Torah had been fabricated, with its tales of a nationwide encounter with God, its 'author' would have had a very hard time selling the story to the Jewish people, who were the descendants of those deemed to have witnessed the revelation. Reports of such a grand experience should surely have been passed on by the people who witnessed it to their children and grandchildren.

God's revelation to the Jewish people at Sinai was a unique event, which gave rise to unique claims:

1. Other religions and belief systems claim authenticity through Divine revelation to one solitary individual. In contrast, the Torah claims that the entire Israelite nation witnessed the revelation of God at Sinai (see Shemot 24:17 and Devarim 4:32-36).

The Kuzari (written by Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, c. 1140) notes that it would have been impossible to fabricate this first claim. Individual claims of personal revelation are neither falsifiable nor verifiable. Followers may choose to believe them if they wish, but their blind faith is all that stands between their perception and reality. However, claims of national revelation (or any national experience) are very difficult to fabricate, as an event of that gravity and significance would have made an indelible

Furthermore, if a charismatic Jewish leader had attempted to invent this claim, and the people would indeed have begun to wonder why their own ancestors had never mentioned this phenomenal event, we would expect to find records of such a hero 'revealing' the 'lost history' of our people. Yet there is no record of such a hero in the annals of Jewish history. It is more reasonable to accept that the event was genuine and the Torah's account authentic.

This argument has wider implications, for it demonstrates that the Jewish people themselves are a medium through which Jewish experience and Torah teachings have been transmitted.

2. A second unique claim about the revelation at Sinai is that the entire Torah, including the Oral Law, was transmitted by God to Moshe, to be passed on from one generation to the next.

In the next two articles, we will explore the scientific principles of Information Theory and compare them to this process of transmission. This will test the legitimacy of the transmission of God's message to mankind.

