



SCIENCE, BELIEF & ETHICS

It's a wonderful world.

The Psalmist (104:24) says, MAH RABU MAASECHA HASHEM... - "How abundant are Your deeds!"

Kant said there are two supreme wonders - the sky and stars, and the human mind and conscience. Emerson said, if the stars only appeared once in a thousand years, "how would man believe and adore!"

The wondrous developments of human skill - include heart transplants, cloning and the application of stem cells, and so many more developments outside medicine.

Yet science has also produced challenges to belief, to the extent that some people are sure that religion is finished forever. They say, "Science disproves religion! Science is the enemy of belief!"

Their error is to confuse scientific fact with scientific theory.

Scientific fact includes the circumference of the earth; temperature at which copper melts.

The question is not the fact but how to interpret it... which leads us to scientific theory, a temporary structure that we might have to re-think. The Rambam

points out that even those theories that last may be because God willed it so.

The crucial thing is not scientific theory but the world of belief and ethics. Its realm is not science but humility, responsibility and purpose.

Teilhard de Chardin says that evolution is not only physical but psychological and ethical. It's not a question of how the material universe came into being but what stage of mental and ethical development we are at.

The Torah says in this week's sidra, "You are a holy people" (D'varim 7:6).

Whatever our particular scientific interest, we have to evolve more and more into a holy people.

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