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"In what ways, if any, do science and Judaism conflict?"

Response by Rabbi Peter Schweitzer

When religion bases its teachings on blind faith, unsubstantiated mythology and superstition, it stands in conflict with science thinking. Worse, when it denies the hard evidence that science provides, it suppresses the advancement of knowledge.

Judaism is mostly innocent of these charges. It is a minority view that historically rejected the Copernican revolution, that holds to a literal reading of the Bible, that thinks the world is only thousands of years old, that believes in miracles or awaits an unproven world-to-come.

In contrast, the true strength of Judaism is its ability to separate myth from fact and to welcome intellectual debate. The true gift of its teachers is their passionate commitment to scientific inquiry and skeptical thinking. Putting aside all the Nobel Prizes, it should really be no wonder that so many Jews entered scientific fields in the first place. Science, for Judaism, is an ally, not an opponent.

Einstein once wrote that "the cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest motive for scientific research." And he also said that for Kepler and Newton to disentangle the principles of celestial mechanics they required a "deep conviction of the rationality of the universe."