

By the Grace of G-d
18th of Adar II, 5733
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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Greeting and Blessing:

Your letter reached me with some delay and my acknowledgment has further been unavoidably delayed by the intervening days of Purim.

With regard to reprinting my letter of the 25th of Elul, 5731, I leave it to your discretion, with only one stipulation. Inasmuch as the readers usually comprise different people, I would not want anyone to misunderstand, even inadvertently, any part of said letter that may appear taken out of context.

Perhaps this is an opportunity to reemphasize several basic points:

- 1) Those well-meaning persons who felt impelled to interpret certain passages in the Torah differently from the time honored traditional interpretation, did so only in the mistaken belief that the Torah view (on the age of the world) was at variance with science; otherwise they would not have sought new interpretations in the Torah.
- 2) The apologetic literature - at least a substantial part of it - that was created as a result of this misconception, relied on the principle that, as in the case of *לומר דרכי מפורש לפני מן לטוב there was no harm in making an "innocent" verbal concession to science, if it would be helpful in strengthening commitment to Torah and Mitzvoth of many.
- 3) At the bottom of this attitude was the mistaken belief that scientific "conclusions" were categorical and absolute.
- 4) Parenthetically, some explanation for this attitude to science may be found in the fact (pointed out in my previous letter), that the Torah accords to science a higher status of credibility than contemporary science lays claim to, as is evidenced from the rule in Halacha that the prohibition of Chilul Shabbos may be waived on the opinion of a physician in the area of Pikuach Nefesh and many similar rulings.
- 5) The crucial point, however, is that the latest conclusions of science introduced a radical change into science's own evaluation of itself, clearly defining its own limitations. Accordingly, there is nothing categorical in science; the principle of cause and effect is substituted by "probable sequence of events." etc

* See also Hulin 27b :

דחיית... בקטא

דחיית בקטא... בקטא
Bereshit Rabbah 8,9:7

6) Furthermore, ^{by} contemporary science holds that scientific judgements and descriptions do not necessarily "present" things as they really are.

7) Science demands empirical verification: "conclusions" are considered "scientific" if they have been investigated experimentally - but certainly not in relation to conditions which have never been even known to mankind and can never be duplicated.

8) In view of all that has been said above, there is no reason whatever to believe that science (as different from scientists) can state anything definitive on something which occurred in the remote past, in the pre-dawn history. Consequently, there is no need to seek new reinterpretations in the Torah to "reconcile" them with science, as stated in the beginning of the letter.

9) Apropos of your special reference to Shabbos Breishis, it is astonishing that those who attempted to reinterpret the Six Days' Creation account in terms of eons etc. failed to even mention the contradiction of such a view with the text of a Get. It is well known how punctilious the Halacha is in regard to a Get. The text of the ~~Get~~ Get begins with the unequivocal dating of it "according to the creation of the world" (eg. in the current ~~year~~ year it would read:

שנה חמשה אלפים שבע מאות ושלשים ושלש לבריאת עולם.

In the words of the Megillah which we read this week, "there is one people... and their laws differ from those of any other people" - may G-d grant that just as in those days our people felt justly proud of their uniqueness and difference and made no attempt to reconcile their laws and customs and views with those ~~of~~ of the people among whom they were "dispersed and scattered," ~~and so they displayed~~ so may every Jew now also display the same courageous spirit, based on the one and the same Torah, since "this Torah shall not be changed or substituted" - one of the basic 13 Principles of our faith, as formulated by our Sages.

With esteem and blessing