Part I: Responding to Norbert Samuelson

The Challenges of the Modern Sciences for Jewish Faith

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A. The Problem

The Hebrew Scriptures present written evidence for what constitutes at least the intellectual content of the culture of those early Jewish people who were the immediate precursors of Rabbinic Jewish civilization. Of course, this civilization did not come into being out of nothing. It has historical, intellectual, and cultural precursors out of which it developed. Solely for the sake of simplification, we begin with this collection of texts as a complete document irrespective of when this codification takes place. Whenever that occurred, the Hebrew Bible describes in broad and usually general terms what were the accepted, maybe even canonical, beliefs of those Judeans who recognized that the new civilization of (for a word) Hellenism was gaining (or possibly already had gained) hegemony over their biblical, Hebrew civilization. Those Judeans recognized that Hellenistic culture contained challenges to biblical culture that, if allowed to pass without address, threatened to destroy Judea, not by physical force but intellectual domination. In this case the challenge was not primarily from armies but from the persuasiveness of Greco-Roman understandings of the nature of the cosmos and everything in it.

The collected texts of at least the Tannaim express the attempt of these earliest rabbis to construct a new understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. This new understanding would enable a

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reconstructed form of biblical faith to make sense out of all the postbiblical changes in history, nature, and in thought about history and nature. These changes in themselves threatened the credibility of the faith put forward by the authors and/or editors of the Hebrew Scriptures. In a word, this is how I understand the significance of the development of Rabbinic philosophy in the corpus of at least tannaitic texts in what had become for subsequent generations of Jews canonical expressions of Jewish faith.

I am not interested in debating here whether or not it is correct to call early Rabbinic writings “philosophy.” Certainly it has minimal resemblance to the kind of writings that today, especially in the world of English-language speakers and thinkers, are called “philosophy.” However, what British and American academic departments call “philosophy” is not the only understanding of the term. In even this Eurocentric subdivision of Western civilization, it has not been the dominant understanding of what is philosophy, and possibly (in my case I can say hopefully) will not continue to be the dominant understanding of what is philosophy for much longer. For me “philosophy” includes all attempts to make sense out of everything in the most general terms, especially to make sense out of how we human beings locate ourselves in the universe relative to everything else in it. This usage minimally includes other human beings and life forms with whom we interact, all of our physical surroundings both on this planet and in the cosmos, and the entire history of everything insofar as we can understand it, from its temporal or atemporal origins if it has any to its temporal or atemporal ends (again) if it has any.

On this very broad definition of “philosophy” there is nothing special about Jewish philosophy except the specificity of the subject term in its description. Jewish philosophy differs in principle from general philosophy only in the range of the term “we” in the above description. Jewish philosophers in this context attempt to “make sense out of how we” Jews (rather than “human beings” in general) “locate ourselves in the universe relative to everything else in it.” Only the subject term in Jewish philosophy is more restricted than the subject term in general philosophy. The rest of the sentence, including the grammatical object related to the grammatical subject, is the same. Jewish philosophy is not reflection solely on the Jewish people and their history. Rather, from the particularistic perspective of the Jewish people with their particular cultural
inheritance of texts called “Rabbinic” and “Jewish,” attempts to understand as well as it can all of inanimate and animate life in a historical perspective. For the moment let’s leave aside the question of what makes this kind of philosophy “Jewish”; let’s focus rather on what makes it “philosophy,” for with this usage of the term there may today be more academic research and reflection relevant to preserving and/or evolving Jewish faith in schools of the physical sciences (especially in physical cosmology) and the life sciences (especially in evolutionary biology) than there is in contemporary departments of philosophy where the focus of critical attention is increasingly on certain kinds of cognitive use of human language.

The challenges to Jewish faith are not limited exclusively to the encounter between Greco-Roman civilization and the philosophy of the Hebrew Scriptures. As Mordecai Kaplan argued almost a century ago, every encounter of the Jewish people with a new challenging culture has produced major “reforms” in what this people both think and do, and these “reconstructions” probably were critical for it to continue to survive. Briefly, the Jewish people will not and cannot survive solely by military, political, social, and/or economic force. It will survive ultimately because now as in the past it confronted challenges, both ethical (with respect to practice) and intellectual (with respect to belief), that it had to meet and ultimately succeeded in meeting. The Jewish people has found human resources, Jewish philosophers if you will, who in a variety of ways have exhibited sufficient creativity as well as intelligence, to respond with moral and intellectual integrity, and those responses have both preserved what was best in previous Jewish philosophy, providing the basis for what would become a new (hopefully improved) Jewish philosophy (or even philosophies) for the following generations. Thus a new culture or even cultures of the Jewish people have continually emerged.

That has been true in the past, but it is not clear that this evolution of Jewish philosophy is happening today. I argue that the lack of development constitutes a very subtle but nonetheless real threat to the continued survival of the Jewish people, or at least the survival of Judaism as the cultural structure through which the Jewish people express their faith.

Why modern Jewry has failed to reform or reconstruct its philosophy in terms of the challenges from modern Western science is
an important question that goes beyond what I am trying to do in this paper. It has to do with the evolution of the physical sciences and the humanistic academic disciplines since the nineteenth century to our day, especially within the institution of the modern university. The sciences and the humanities have evolved in increasingly radically different directions within an institution that itself has evolved simultaneously in contradictory directions—both as the sole institution for purely intellectual speculative activity and in its growing dependence with democratization on capitalistic pragmatic activity. The failure to reform or reconstruct Jewish philosophy has to do with decisions by emancipated Western Jews during the nineteenth century to focus their confrontation with the dominant Western culture on issues that belong to the humanities rather than on challenges that emerge from the sciences. Other factors are also relevant to this complex story, but discussing them goes beyond the topic of this paper. Regardless of the causes, what is clear is that the modern sciences raise serious challenges to continued belief in the traditional and liberal philosophies of Judaism, that contemporary Jewish philosophers are minimally informed of what those challenges are, and consequently that perhaps for the first time in Jewish history committed Jewish thinkers are not succeeding in confronting and dealing with the major challenges of the modern sciences to Jewish faith.

My recently published book *Jewish Faith and Modern Science* addresses this problem. The purpose of the book is not to respond to the challenges, although the second half of the book offers a general strategy for such response. Rather, the primary goal of the book is to call attention to the threat in the hope that raised consciousness in Jewish intellectual circles will lead to a serious encounter of Jewish thinkers with the physical and biological sciences comparable to the rich philosophically informed body of Jewish responses to challenges in modern Western (notably French and German) humanist-directed philosophy in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

### B. The Challenges

Following the topology proposed by Franz Rosenzweig in his *Star of Redemption*, questions about Jewish faith center at the most general level on three topics—creation, revelation, and redemption. I
want here to summarize my perception of the challenges to Rabbinic faith from the modern sciences around these same three topics. All three are statements about divine relations, viz, how God relates to the cosmos at its origin (creation), to the Jewish people in history (Torah, or Mosaic revelation), and to both the cosmos and everything within it with a focus on its end (redemption and the end of days).

Here are the challenges to Judaism that emerge from the sciences:

**A. Issues with Creation**

1. From the history and archeology of the ancient Near East: Are academic bible scholars better trained than rabbis to (a) say what the Bible means and (b) serve as moral guides for our lives? Are Bible scholars wiser than rabbis?
2. From quantum mechanics: (a) The moral value of individuals is questionable in God’s physical universe. (b) The existential value of individuals also is questionable. Both problems significantly undercut the rationale for a liberal Judaism.
3. From astronomy: Since constellations are not real, how does the God of the universe relate to earthbound creatures? From microbiology and microphysics: How does God govern particles?
4. From relativity physics: What is the relation of God to space-time given that space and time are inseparable?
5. From general physics: What is the soul? Is it a form of energy or is it something spiritual or is it something else?
6. What would a cosmology look like that fits the data of physics and astronomy but assigns reality to morality in the physical universe? Where in the modern conception of the universe is there room for quality and purpose as physically real?
7. Ignorance of physics results in inadequate views of the universe in a number of respects: The universe of humanists and other Jewish philosophers (a) is too small and too shallow (too small from the perspective of the cosmos and too shallow from the perspective of the microcosmos), (b) can make no sense out of the notion of purpose in our purely mechanical/mathematical world view, and (c) cannot account for all changes that occur within our universe.
8. Our universe is too old and human existence is too brief for humanity to provide the reason for the existence of the universe. If we give up this humanist assumption, how can we understand why God created the universe?
9. Especially in light of the principle of inertia, is there a good reason to posit a creator of the universe?
10. Jewish thinking needs to rethink ontological monism and negative theology. For guidance in how to rethink these subjects, models can be adapted from the metaphysics of both Alfred N. Whitehead and Franz Rosenzweig.

B. Issues with Redemption

11. The challenge of standard neo-Darwinism to claim that reality/nature exhibits purpose and design.
12. The need to move beyond the dogma that seeing is believing to a new affirmation of the reality of God.
13. The need to move beyond mind-body dualism to a new monism.
14. The need to move beyond mechanistic science to a philosophy of the soul in terms of grounds for analysis of objective morality and of redemption.
15. The need to move beyond life and death absolutes to redefine humanity in terms of a conception of an asymptotic end of worshiping God.
16. The need to rethink the commitment to preserving human nature and restricting moral responsibility exclusively to human life forms.
17. Understanding halachah more in the modes of Eastern religions as a “way” and less in the modes of Western religions as a “law.” Beyond all the confusion of the mostly unintelligible rhetoric of Jewish theologians, this distinction is the bottom-line difference between liberal and traditional Judaism.
18. When and how does life begin and end?
19. What does it mean to be “human”? When do chemical reactions become living things? When do living things become human beings?
20. What role does and should capitalism play in decisions about living and dying?
C. Issues with Revelation

21. Should scholars rewrite Jewish history?
22. Is Judaism “philosophy”?
23. Are the Hebrew Scriptures a “fraud”?
24. Are the Hebrew Scriptures “pious”?
25. Are the Hebrew Scriptures “history”?
26. Are the Hebrew Scriptures “authoritative”?

The most familiar to students of Jewish thought are the issues concerning revelation. Question 21 has been discussed ever since the study of Jewish history emerged in Germany almost two centuries ago as a form of what we call Wissenschaft, viz, Wissenschaft des Judentums, which here means academic discipline rather than “science” since the modern study of history properly belongs under the academic umbrella of the humanities rather than of the sciences. Question 22, Is Judaism “philosophy”? has already been dealt with above. Finally questions 23–26 all have to do with (particularly) German source-critical approaches to the study of Bible, which properly belong to the disciplines of history and text studies, and both of these, like history, are humanities rather than sciences.

It is not that the issues revolving around revelation are not critical. Quite the contrary. Again no viable commitment to some form of Jewish faith is maintainable that does not deal with these questions. But in at least this case the issues are well known to anyone interested in modern Jewish thought, and there already exists a long list (too long for this paper) of important and relevant efforts by Jewish thinkers (notably by Bible scholars and Jewish theologians) to respond. Instead my attention will be on the first two classifications—creation and redemption—and, since it is too much to discuss all of these points in a single paper, I will here focus only on one. My example will be on Question 9. Especially in light of the principle of inertia, is there a good reason to posit a creator of the universe? I choose it because I think of all the issues raised, its centrality is the least transparent of all the claimed challenges on the list.

C. An Example: The Scientific Principle of Inertia and the Rabbinic Doctrine of Creation

I want to make two points. First, demonstrations in classical (i.e., medieval) Jewish philosophy of the central claims that the
purported creator of the universe exists, is one, and is incorpo-
real (henceforth referred for brevity as “God”) presupposes a
Platonized-Aristotelianized general understanding of physics and
astronomy. Second, these cited scientific premises are inconsistent
with central claims in modern (by which I mean post-Newtonian)
physics and astronomy. The proper conclusions from the demon-
stration are the following: One, it is not that the classic proofs are
logically invalid; it is rather that their claims are not absolutely
valid but valid only within certain ways of conceiving reality sci-
entifically. Two, the first conclusion entails that theology presup-
poses the physical sciences, so that theological claims are always
relative to scientific claims. Hence, three, theology or more gener-
ally religious belief presupposes coming to terms with the funda-
mental claims of the physical sciences.

In my Revelation and the God of Israel, I have a section called “The
Philosophy of Religion—Proofs that God Exists.” There I have ar-
gued for this general thesis. Here I want to offer a more detailed
demonstration of only a single, although critical, claim in the gen-
eral argument put forth in the book. I will look specifically at those
scientific claims put forth by Maimonides in the Guide of the Per-
plexed as premises for his demonstrations of God, which conflict
with the Newtonian principle of inertia in modern physics. I want
to tease out the possible consequences for contemporary Jewish
theology in this apparent conflict.

In the introduction to the second part of the Guide, Maimonides
presents twenty-six premises, some of which clearly conflict with
the principle of inertia. These are the following: (17) “Everything
that is in motion has of necessity a mover.” (18) “Everything that
passes from potentiality to actuality has something other than it-
self that causes it to pass, and this cause is of necessity outside
that thing.” And finally, (25) “The principles of an individual com-
 pound substance are matter and form…with regard to this, every-
thing that it is necessary to explain has already been explained.
The text of the words of Aristotle is: ‘Matter does not move it-
self.’” Pines cites Aristotle’s Metaphysics xii.6.1071b29–30 for this
reference and comments “The quotation is accurate.”

In a word every action by an agent and every state of affairs
for a subject requires an explanation, in contrast to the situation
in modern physics where no explanation is needed for something
to be what or how it is; only to change from being to becoming
something else that calls for a cause. Aristotle limits the lack of need for explanation for actually being in some way solely to a kind of being called “necessary.” With every other kind of being that is not necessary, there is a need for explanation, because anything that (in Aristotelian language) becomes actual had first to be potential, and as potential required something to cause it to change from being potential to becoming actual. However, in modern Newtonian and post-Newtonian physics the entire conceptual apparatus of potentiality and actuality, including the ontological categories of form and matter, are rejected. Instead, all being is actual being or no being at all, and the kind of things that actually exist are material and not formal.

Newton’s first law in his The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy reads as follows: “Every body perseveres in its state of being at rest or of moving uniformity straight forward, except insofar as it is compelled to change its state by forces impressed.”11 I. Bernard Cohen maintains that this law follows immediately from definitions 3 and 4,12 which state as follows: (Definition 3): “Inherent force of matter is the power of resisting by which every body, so far as it is able, perseveres in its state either of resting or of moving uniformly straight forward”13 and (Definition 4): “Impressed force is the action exerted on a body to change its state either of resting or of moving uniformly straight ahead.”14 About his third definition Newton elaborates, saying “Because of the inertia of matter, every body is only with difficulty put out of its state either of resting or of moving,”15 and further, “For a body perseveres in any new state solely by the force of inertia.” Hence, clearly the terms “inherent force” and “impressed force” already contain within their meaning the law of inertia. Translated into modern scientific, more mathematical language, what this principle or “law” expresses is the judgment that “a body in uniform motion remains in uniform motion, and a body at rest remains at rest, unless acted on by a nonzero net force.”16 In other words, whatever is true of the state of a physical thing, be it rest or motion or anything else for that matter, it will persist in that state unless some physical thing else causes it to change.

Given this central change in physics, none of Maimonides’ listed proofs (what he calls “speculations”) of God work. Maimonides presents four distinct arguments for God, all of which were adopted almost word for word by Thomas Aquinas in his
demonstrations of God’s existence in his *Summa Theologica*,\(^{17}\) and all of them explicitly or implicitly rest on our listed three premises (numbers 17, 18, and 25). The first proof, which is an argument for God as a first cosmic “mover,” explicitly invokes premise 17.\(^{18}\) The second proof, which is an argument for the causal priority of simplicity over complexity, explicitly names no premises. In contrast, the third proof, which is an argument for the causal priority of necessity over contingency does list premises, namely 19–22,\(^{19}\) but not the three that concern us. Similarly, the fourth proof, which is an argument for the priority of actuality over potentiality, also lists three premises, namely numbers 23, 24, and 16,\(^{20}\) but not the three that concern us. Still, even though Maimonides mentioned only one of the three (the seventeenth) by name, and he mentions it only with reference to his first of the four arguments, it is clear from his introduction to this discussion that he intended all three premises to be precisely that, premises, that is, assumptions upon which his four arguments for God depend.\(^{21}\)

Implicitly, even if not explicitly, an argument can be made that all of Maimonides’ arguments in some sense or another presuppose what Maimonides and other Aristotelian philosophers are saying about the nature of explanation that these listed premises assert. Put in nontechnical terms, nothing comes from nothing. Yet, if a set of causes produces effects that are not entailed in the nature of the causes themselves, then the effects can be said to come from nothing. Hence, it does not seem reasonable that something is moving for no reason whatsoever (contrary to premise 17), for otherwise from where does the motion come? Similarly, potentiality is really not in itself anything at all, for what it is depends both on the something actual from which it originates and the something else actual into which it terminates. Hence, any potentiality presupposes something else actual as having at least logical if not causal priority (premise 18). Finally, as Aristotelian physics defines its categories of form and matter, where form is the principle that accounts for what a thing is while matter is the principle that accounts for the temporal-spatial fact that it is, anything that can be materialized must be in some sense informed (premise 25), from nothing can nothing become real, and only some thing can be something.

Yet this Newtonian principle of the new physics overturns past common sense no less radically than the seventeenth century’s
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new cosmology of heliocentrism overturned the geocentrism of the premoderns. In the new physics no explanation is needed for why something is what it is; prima facie all things merely happen to be what they are; the ruling principle of the state of affairs in nature is chance—an implication of modern science that took two centuries of reflection on Newton’s revolutionary conception of the physical world to become explicit. Rather, explanation is needed only for a change from any preexisting state to a new state, contrary to the common sense of the pre-Newtonians whose sense dictated the necessary existence, oneness, and incorporeality of their deity.

D. Conclusion

Given this explication of the principle of inertia, let’s turn to Question 9 listed above. Especially in light of the principle of inertia, is there a good reason to posit a creator of the universe? How should or may contemporary thinkers respond to the implicit challenge entailed by the above listed ninth issue between modern physics and the tradition Jewish theological commitment to belief in the God of Israel as the creator of the cosmos and everything in it? The religious studies scholar Ian Barbour has argued that there are four possible ways that apparent conflicts between the claims of contemporary sciences and contemporary religions can be handled. The four types of relations are: “conflict,” “independence,” “dialogue,” and “integration.” John Hedley Brooke has modified Barbour’s claim, saying that usually all four of Barbour’s ways are not distinct elements but are joined together in any attempted conceptual encounter with these apparent contraries. For example, let us examine the apparent conflict between the truth claims of post-Newtonian physics that origins in themselves are due to chance and require no explanation to be intelligible and the Rabbinic fundamental or “root” principle (ikar) that the universe both has and conceptually requires a creator. Both claims are methodologically independent of each other in the minimal sense that it is solely the business of scientists to determine what they within their disciplines mean by “explanation,” as it is solely the business of rabbis to determine what they mean when they say that God is the creator of the universe. Furthermore, this assertion about the proper domains of the sciences and of Rabbinic theology is for Judaism a foundational principle.
However, both claims are made about the same reality, viz., this physical universe, and some dialogue is required by serious thinking Jews (both with each other and within their own thinking) on what a reality looks like about which both claims can be made. It is not sufficient to simply say “science speaks about one kind of universe whereas Judaism speaks about another kind of the universe.” If Judaism is to be a reasonable faith for committed Jews who choose not to withdraw from physical reality, Rabbinic thought may not divorce itself from the world of the physical any more than the physical world governed by the laws of physics can be treated as indifferent to Rabbinic law and thought. In the end the initial conflict must be resolved through dialogue in an integrated view of total reality, a reality that takes the laws of the physical sciences (or, the Torah) no less seriously than it takes the laws of the Torah (or, the physical sciences).

One possible solution is to conceive of all of reality in the way that Plato did when he wrote the *Timaeus*. There the cosmos is imagined as a smooth spherical surface that reflects objects of light above it. The sphere is physical space; the objects reflected on the sphere are our physical universe; and the points of light reflected are the deities. As used by the medieval Jewish philosophers and mystics, there is only one point of light (viz., the God of Israel), and the rest of reality is simply a reflection of that single point whose plurality and diversity is attributable not to its source but to the peculiar nature of the reflecting surface. Note that on this model the universe may be said to have an origin, but the origin is not subject to time, which means that it does not reflect any kind of claim that is contrary to the physical law of inertia. However, note furthermore that on this model our world (the reflections) are appearances that have no distinctive ontological status in a universe that contains only two realities—space (the mirror) and God (the point of light)—and of the two it is debatable which has positive being (both, either, or neither), for it could be reasonably maintained (a) that the mirror is space, and space is where beings are located, but space itself is not a being, or (b) that God is here understood as a point, a point is a circle (in two dimensions) or a globe (in three or more dimensions) whose radius is either zero or functionally zero (i.e., infinitesimal), and a circular object whose radius is zero is itself nothing at all.

Plato’s *Timaeus* is not the only way that we may and even have imaged a cosmos in which God functions as an origin independent
of any notion of efficient temporal cause. The most commonly used world view today is that of Alfred North Whitehead in his *Process and Reality.* Here all of temporal-spatial reality is imaged as a plurality of “actual entities” that have mental and physical aspects but are in themselves neither. Rather they are more “occasions,” that is, events or (in the language of modern logic) “states of affairs” that flow in space through time from one occasion into another. Here reality is imagined somewhat as it appears through a microscope—as a sea of fluid beings constantly flowing past, through, and into each other, ultimately coalescing to form new actual entities. The things in the sea and the sea itself together constitute a living, changing being in which everything else is fluid. This fluidity is conceived in terms of a dynamic flow, a flow that exhibits direction but no starting point or ending point. There is no beginning or end in any finite temporal sense, but the flow is conceived in terms of a nontemporal origin and a nontemporal end. That origin is described as containing the seemingly infinite potential of everything that the actual entities may become throughout the flow of physical and mental reality. Conversely the end is described as what it is that everything will coalesce to become when every potentiality is exhausted and reality reaches the idealized, asymptotic end towards which everything is moving. However this end is ideal and not real (to use the mathematical language of Hermann Cohen). It is an end that directs an infinite flow, but the end itself is finite. It functions eternally as an end or ideal (again in Hermann Cohen’s language) that is beyond time. Whitehead calls this infinite repository of an idealized universe at its origin “the primordial nature of God,” and the idealized universe at its end “the consequent nature of God.” Note that, consistent with the law of inertia, what is real (as opposed to ideal) is the directed motion of transitory beings from an infinitely remote past towards an equally infinitely remote future.

I have intentionally built into the above description of Whitehead references to the reasoned cosmic picture of Hermann Cohen, even though I have no basis to believe that either philosopher was familiar with the other. I do so to call attention to the similarity between the envisioned cosmos of Whitehead and its counterpart in Cohen’s disciple, Franz Rosenzweig. In his *Star of Redemption,* Rosenzweig images the created world of physical objects as an unending flow of potential nothings changing continuously towards
a final end of becoming some-things, an end in a "kingdom of God" where every potentiality will be realized and come together as a single light that replaces all darkness in which, in the words of traditional Jewish liturgy, "on that day the Lord will be one and his name will be one." Rosenzweig images this world as a spatial domain filled with darkness where emerging some-things fill, and thereby enlighten, the empty space. Within the space of this world the emergent some-things are animate and inanimate; the animate beings are human and nonhuman, and the human beings are pagans, Christians, and Jews. In Rosenzweig’s conception of the divine kingdom at the end of everything (beyond the traditional Rabbinic “end of days”) Rosenzweig images the disappearance of everything into a single universal light. Following Maimonides’ negative theology, Rosenzweig tells us that God by definition is not anything that is, so that each thing that becomes something defines God by God not being him/her/it. In the end God is fully defined by a fully emerging universe that is not God, but because this plenitude of light is all that is, at this final asymptotic end, there no longer is any distinction between God and the world.

The parallels between Rosenzweig’s Cohenian conception of the cosmos and Whitehead’s seem to me to be obvious, and the source of the identity is not any shared historical influence, but shared traditions of Western religion and modern science, which, in both cases, are directed towards integrating the biblical religious traditions of textual commentary with seemingly conflicting modern Western scientific claims, the most important of which (for our present purposes) being Newton’s first law of motion, the principle of inertia.

What this discussion of the seeming but no more than apparent contradiction between the modern physical principle of inertia and the traditional Rabbinic principle of divine creation illustrates is how a creative religious thinker of the quality of Rosenzweig engaged modern science with sophisticated religious faith. Despite the many attempts by contemporary commentators on his writings to the contrary, Rosenzweig was not an anti-rationalist who claimed the truth of Judaism despite reason. On the contrary, while he affirmed that the domain of revealed belief transcends the domain of human scientific and philosophic knowledge, a proper interpretation of the former did not and could not contradict a legitimate application of the latter. Both faith and reason had significant
and complementary roles to play in the pursuit of the true, and it is the true that is the goal of both science and religion. The speculative writings of Rosenzweig about Jewish texts and Whitehead about Christian doctrine present prime examples of how Western people of faith can and should struggle to integrate their spiritual life with their humanist pursuit through science of wisdom.

Notes


7. Ibid., 235–41.

8. Ibid., 237.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 239.


12. Ibid., 110.

13. Ibid., 404.


15. Ibid., 404.


18. Maimonides, *Guide*, 243: “Now, when, in the last resort, we have gone back to this sphere, which is in motion, it follows necessarily that it must have a mover, according to what has been set forth before in the seventeenth premise.”


20. Ibid., 249.

21. Seeming mistakes of this sort occur throughout the *Guide* on all kinds of subjects. They read as if the author did not carefully proofread what he was writing, which, given Maimonides’ daily schedule of activities as a court physician and as a religious-political leader of the Jewish community of Egypt would not be surprising. However, most scholars of the *Guide* find it unreasonable to assume such a degree of lack of precision in Maimonides’ writing and prefer to think that these incoherencies in the written text suggest that Maimonides was transmitting secret messages for a targeted elect among his readers. (Personally I find it preferable to accuse Maimonides of imprecision than intentional falsification.)


26. I leave for another paper a more complete discussion of the parallels between Whitehead and Rosenzweig.