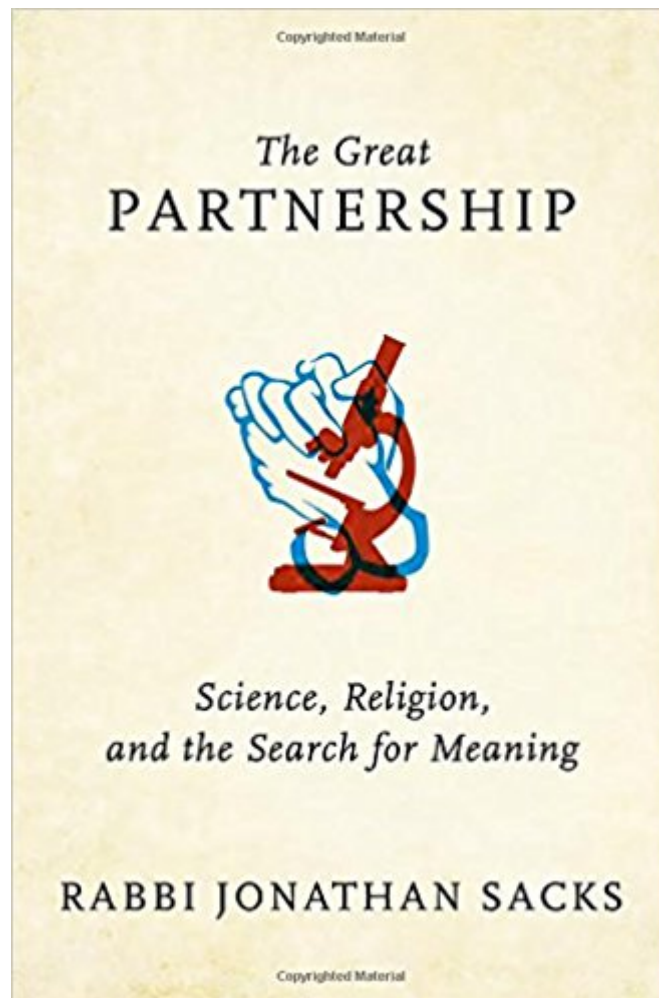




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# The Great Partnership: Science, Religion, And The Search For Meaning



## Synopsis

\*\*\*National Jewish Book Awards 2012, Finalist\*\*\*Dorot Foundation Award for Modern Jewish

Thought and ExperienceAn impassioned, erudite, thoroughly researched, and beautifully reasoned book from one of the most admired religious thinkers of our time that argues not only that science and religion are compatible, but that they complement each other—and that the world needs both. “Atheism deserves better than the new atheists,” states Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, “whose methodology consists of criticizing religion without understanding it, quoting texts without contexts, taking exceptions as the rule, confusing folk belief with reflective theology, abusing, mocking, ridiculing, caricaturing, and demonizing religious faith and holding it responsible for the great crimes against humanity. Religion has done harm; I acknowledge that. But the cure for bad religion is good religion, not no religion, just as the cure for bad science is good science, not the abandonment of science.” Rabbi Sacks’s counterargument is that religion and science are the two essential perspectives that allow us to see the universe in its three-dimensional depth. Science teaches us where we come from. Religion explains to us why we are here. Science is the search for explanation. Religion is the search for meaning. We need scientific explanation to understand nature. We need meaning to understand human behavior. There have been times when religion tried to dominate science. And there have been times, including our own, when it is believed that we can learn all we need to know about meaning and relationships through biochemistry, neuroscience, and evolutionary psychology. In this fascinating look at the interdependence of religion and science, Rabbi Sacks explains why both views are tragically wrong.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A figure of great stature and sometimes the center of controversy in England, where he has served as chief rabbi for two decades, Rabbi Sacks is certain to add to both his stature and the controversy that surrounds him with the publication of *The Great Partnership*. . . . Society needs both religion and science, Sacks argues in this innovative, articulate, and well-documented book. He effortlessly includes statistics and history, personal stories and culture-wide experiences, all of it making clear the differences he sees between the *Weltanschauung* of his world and that of the atheist. •The Jewish Week

“The Great Partnership is illuminating and sometimes genuinely moving, because of the erudition and the warm personality with which Rabbi Sacks unrolls his credo. . . . It makes a persuasive case that the bloody rhetorical war between science and religion is not just unnecessary; it is foolish. . . . A humane, learned *cri de coeur*. •The Wall Street Journal

“In prose that is both stately and accessible, Rabbi Sacks offers an examination of the most profound issues of faith and science that is both intellectually rigorous and generous in spirit. With an impressive range of scholarship that extends far beyond the Jewish tradition, he marshals an array of arguments for the proposition that we need both religion and science. •Shelf Awareness

“In clear language Sacks sets forth the arguments put forward by atheists, respectfully demolishing them in favor of the religious stance that he forthrightly espouses. The range and depth of his familiarity with authorities in both camps are most impressive [and] his erudite position is largely compelling. . . . Essential reading because of Sacks’s splendid range of knowledge and his powerful ability to tackle tough issues. •Publishers Weekly

“A brilliant exposition of the possibility of science and religion, each in its own way, contributing to a better world. •Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

“There is a warm, accessible scholarship about Rabbi Sacks; it’s easy to see why he is such a popular sage. The *Great Partnership* will only burnish this reputation. After several years in which the new atheists •Dawkins, Hitchens, Hawking •have made all the running, Sacks offers an intelligent, optimistic credo that allows for the happy coexistence of science and religion. . . . For those people who know that science is right but still want to believe, this cake-and-eat-it argument is made with erudition, scholarship, and charm. •The Times (London)

“The learned and humane Sacks normally speaks from within the Jewish tradition. But here he is much more inclusive, drawing from Judaism, Christianity and, he claims, Islam . . . His erudition is extensive [and he] is engaging and thought-provoking throughout. His exploration of the deep differences between classical Greek and

Hebrew thought is quite brilliant. . . . Without a doubt he is a wise thinker and a national treasure. — The Independent

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has been Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Great Britain and the Commonwealth since 1991 and has received honorary degrees from universities around the world. He is the award-winning author of more than twenty books, writes frequently for The Times (London) and other periodicals, and is heard regularly on the BBC. He was made a Life Peer and took his seat in the House of Lords in October 2009.

Whatever your belief structure, you will be challenged and educated by Rabbi Sacks analysis of the relationship between science and religion. He approaches this topic with rigorous scholarship, while not giving any side in the debate an escape from his criticism. He also offers some insightful comments on both the etiology of western thought, as well as how Judaism informs both Christianity and Islam.

By far the greatest work I have read to date on the issue of Science vs. Religion. Rabbi Sacks masterfully asserts that they are not in conflict, but rather work in concert. The premise seems so obvious now that he has articulated it. He writes with a flow that pulled me and guided me throughout. I absolutely loved this book. His depth of knowledge for Judaism is to be expected (but still manages to amaze), and his grasp of Christianity is astonishing. He "gets" Christianity much better than many modern Christian writers.

Oh yes! You want to read this. Brilliant presentation (as Sachs always gives us) of how science tells us what happens while religion tells us why we need it. It ends the either/or battle between science and religion and marries them to answer many of today's dilemmas.

A carefully written classic from Rabbi Sacks which argues the importance science and mans quest to understand "how" and the role of religion to help us understand "why".

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks opens up new vistas of thought between old and new, left and right brain, Hebrew and Greek, and Science and Religion. I'm only two chapters in and I'm already recommending this book to others. Thank you Rabbi Sacks for inspiring this pastor!

This is a fine piece of thinking and writing by one of our finest thinkers and writers. Rabbi Sacks has a great and inclusive mind, and a heart that humanizes and uplifts wherever he casts his gaze. He is quite clear about his beliefs and about how both science and religion do their work, and his background in both science and religion uniquely prepares him for this important conversation. He shows great respect for all sides of the questions. You may agree or disagree with his conclusions, or maybe even with his questions; but his erudition and the depth of his knowledge and concern for humanity will draw you into the discussion with joy and gratitude. Thank you yet again, Rabbi Sacks!

Perhaps the most influential book we have read in our book group ever. Sacks brings so much together in this thoughtful, challenging, and profound piece of writing. I just started re-reading it just after finishing it for the first time.

I heard Rabbi Sacks on a radio show, and had to buy the book. I'm now on my third copy as I keep giving them away. A great book for a thoughtful college student to help him or her navigate overwhelming secularism. Jonathan Sacks reminds us that we have much wisdom to learn from each other in our quest for meaning.

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