



Yeshiva University / Office of the Chancellor

April 24, 2007

Dr. Leon R. Kass
American Enterprise Institute
1150 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Dr. Kass:

I was thrilled and inspired by your article, "Science, Religion, and the Human Future," in the recent issue of *Commentary* (April 2007).

This is a *tour de force* on a subject of perennial interest to those of us who espouse Torah Umadda, and especially focus on the natural sciences on the one hand and Torah on the other. I truly believe that it will remain a guidepost for all of us who are dedicated to both science and religion, who struggle with their relationships, and will find balm for their intellectual wounds in your article.

May I make one comment? You write on page 45, column 2, "Moreover being is *hierarchic*, and man is the highest being in creation..." If you meant this in a general sense, as a sort of literary flourish, I would have no objection. However, I believe that there is a good chance that there are intelligent creatures elsewhere in this vast universe of ours.

I have written about this in my *Faith and Doubt*, and I show that the question of whether man is the "purpose of creation" is in dispute between Saadia and Maimonides. The former believed that man is the "axle" of creation -- and the Midrash in various passages assumes the truth of Saadia's view. However, Maimonides emphatically disagrees and maintains that man's supremacy is confined to what he calls the "sub-lunar" regions which, in modern lingo would mean, our own solar system. Maimonides, of course, did not speculate about actual, biological, sentient and intelligent beings flourishing elsewhere, but nevertheless he finds no contradiction between the Biblical teaching of the creation of man and the assertion that there may be other and perhaps superior beings elsewhere.

If you wish, I will be glad to send you a copy of the new edition of *Faith and Doubt*.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Cordially yours,

NORMAN LAMM
Chancellor

NL/ht