

A Synopsis of

The Wonder of the World

A Journey from Modern Science to the Mind of God

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The book *The Wonder of the World: A Journey from Modern Science to the Mind of God* is an inquiry into those everyday experiences and “facts of life” that are as mystifying as they are obvious and ordinary. From commonplace phenomena like language and reproduction to such enigmas as energy, life, consciousness, mind and the laws of nature, science brings us face to face with magic and mystery. The world is nothing less than a wonderland. Paradoxically, we search anxiously for signals from across the Universe that show the presence out there of (“extra-terrestrial”) intelligent agents: but the Universe itself with its laws and fields and forces is the ultimate Signal of Intelligence. These and a hundred other Wonders of nature and modern science are the raw materials from which *The Wonder of the World* crafts a dazzling new vision of the universe and human life.

The book is a dialogue between an atheist (Dr. Joseph Levin—screen name “Geek”) and a theist (Dr. Madhva Mitra—screen name “Guru”). The dialogue is preceded by two presentations from Guru. In **Seven Wonders**, he outlines the big picture: the plenitude of wonder embedded in our experience and everywhere present. By way of demonstration, he drills down to concrete instances of phenomena that evoke wonder:

1. *The wonder of existence.* This is a mystery that confronts us at every instant: every time we realize that we or anything around us exists we are moved to wonder how this was and is possible and how it all began.
2. *The mystery of the laws of nature.* The existence of the laws of nature is the single greatest mystery uncovered by science—

one that baffles the most skeptical scientist as much as it does anyone else.

3. *The intelligence of the universe.* Guru proposes the idea now accepted by most of modern science that the entire universe is pervaded by intelligence. At all levels, we witness a magnificent progression in degrees and kinds of intelligence that originate and culminate in an infinite Intelligence. The four basic kinds of intelligence we encounter in our experience are embedded (electrons), active (living beings), self-aware (human beings) and—undergirding all the others—infinite Intelligence.

4. *The endless epiphany of energy.* Energy is all around us, all the time. But we are barely aware of its presence. Still less do we know what it is and where it comes from.

5. *Life.* We take life for granted but rarely realize its astounding nature. On the biological level, life is characterized by such activities as nutrition, metabolism, growth, response to stimulus, self-motion and replication and the complex interplay of nucleic acids and proteins. On the ontological level, life adds a wholly new dimension to the material universe with its hierarchy of autonomous agents driven by intelligent symbol-processing (through the medium of DNA/RNA). In studying life as a phenomenon we are struck especially by three of its features: autonomous agency, intelligent processing of messages and a hierarchy of distinct forms.

6. *Homo “sapiens.”* In considering our everyday experience as conscious thinking agents, we realize that consciousness, which is inexplicable on a purely physical level, is seen to be quali-

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Is the matrix of modern science a religious view of the world formulated most clearly by the four greatest thinkers of Judaism, theistic Hinduism, Christianity and Islam? ♦ What did the pioneers and prophets of science think of God? ♦ And what does science tell us about the origins of energy, autonomous intelligent agents (life-forms), consciousness, language, reproduction and the laws of nature? ♦ What happened “before” the Big Bang? Does the universe have an IQ measured by the progressive manifestation of intelligence in its history? ♦ Who holds the patent on quantum fields and the genetic code? ♦ How do electrons and photons, cells and proteins, “know” what to do and what keeps them ticking? How do thoughts “cause” brain events? ♦ Is there a supra-scientific Theory of Everything?

tatively transphysical in character; concepts and universals, as well as language, testify to the intrinsically immaterial nature of thought; the self that continues through all our experiences is not an illusion but an independently existing reality; the intentions and free actions that characterize most of our daily activities are not simply and solely the pre-determined applications of the laws of physics.

7. *Seeing God here and now.* The climax of *Seven Wonders* is the assertion that we can truly see God in the world. Of course, once we understand what is meant by God, we also understand that the Infinite is not something you can “see” physically. Nevertheless, it is asserted that in a very concrete sense we can actually touch, see and feel God and that, in fact, all sensations, all sights and sounds are perceptions of God. Why? Because God invented each one of them and sustains and participates in them. God is not simply the Cause of all things but a Cause that acts and is known through Its effects. For instance, the scents and colors of a beautiful rose come to us directly from God manifesting the divine Presence and Glory. Now the rose is not God or a part of God. Rather, the rose in its entirety not only reflects the glory of God (like a brilliant work of philosophy manifests the mind of its author) but makes God present to us as an immediate and continuing manifestation of (a) the divine power that holds it in being and sustains its activities (b) the infinite intelligence that conceived it and (c) the ineffable beauty from which its colors and scents spring.

While **Seven Wonders** narrates what we experience in daily life and learn from science, in his second presentation, **Sages and Scientists**, Guru recounts humanity’s response to the Wonder of the World. He focuses specifically on the way in which this response inspired and shaped modern science. He holds that the foundational framework of modern science, with the key idea of laws of nature, was born and bred in the theistic world-vision. What is more, within a time window of 300 years, the four finest thinkers of Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam framed a meta-scientific Theory of Everything that underpins the scientific enterprise. This intellectual superstructure, that he calls the Matrix, provided a systematic rationale for the foundations of science. Its starting-point and core principle was an “equation of God.” Interestingly the great scientists who “founded” modern science, Copernicus, Newton, Maxwell, Einstein, Planck, Heisenberg, Dirac and numerous others, were Prophets of the Matrix in the sense that they passionately proclaimed the root-and-fruit embeddedness of science and religion. **The Matrix is the common platform that supports both science and religion.**

The culmination of **Sages and Scientists** is Guru’s outline of an Eight-Fold Path to a Theory of Everything which is a modern-day embodiment of the Matrix.

These two presentations are followed by the **Guru2Geek** dialogues. These are debates between Guru and Geek on the interpretation and implications of the latest scientific data. The first debate, **Seeing is Believing**, centers on the phenomenon of sight. Since skeptics like to say they have to “see it to believe it,” Guru starts with an analysis of the act of seeing itself; in fact the phenomenon of seeing is for him a fundamentally important datum that launches a thousand trains of thought. Guru and Geek engage in a vigorous debate on the significance of physical sight (seeing with the brain) and conceptual insight (seeing with the mind) and what it tells us about the universe.

Guru follows up this discussion of seeing with the idea that nature should be seen as an astonishing invention. In **The Invention of Nature** he argues that, on any account of the world, we have to acknowledge that there is a blueprint underlying the existence of all the things that constitute it. Moreover, it is an inventor’s blueprint because each thing with its particular conjunction of properties and its ability to follow certain specific laws is framed in terms of an “idea” and it is an idea that comes to life. Every petal, every quark, every molecule of gas was “thought up” before it was materialized. From this starting-point, Guru and Geek consider all the hot-buttons of modern science: the latest theories of space and time; the puzzling implications of quantum theory; various cosmological theories of the origin of the universe; theories of the origin of life; the origin of species with particular attention to homo sapiens; the idea of divine action in the world; and the question of the origin of the laws of nature.

The final dialogue, **The Mind of God**, centers on the existence and nature of God. Here Guru and Geek start with the question of whether it is possible for the mind to know truth. This is followed by a consideration of the claim that eastern mysticism is particularly relevant to modern physics. In the final sections, Guru and Geek explore arguments for God’s existence and the counter-claims of the atheists. The dialogues have a climactic ending described in the epilogue. An appendix that lists a hundred wonders of the world serves as a quick reference guide to the book.

To order *The Wonder of the World* or for more information, visit <http://www.thewonderoftheworld.com/>

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