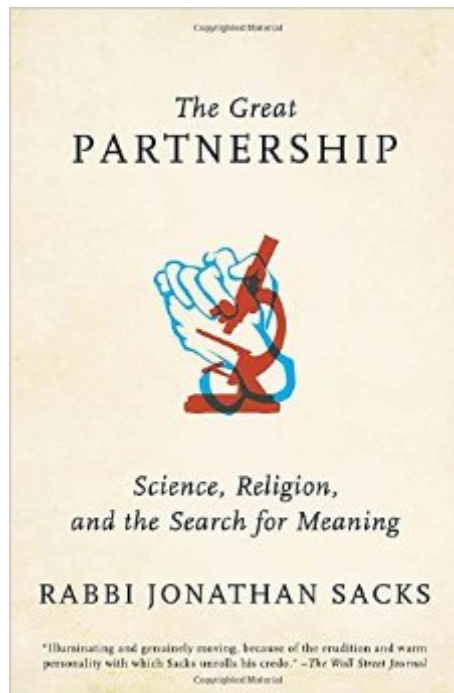


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# The Great Partnership: Science, Religion, And The Search For Meaning



## Synopsis

Impassioned, erudite, thoroughly researched, and beautifully reasoned, *The Great Partnership* 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, ridiculing, 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. 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. \*\*\*National Jewish Book Awards 2012, Finalist\*\*\* Dorot Foundation Award for Modern Jewish Thought and Experience

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It was difficult to decide how many stars to give this book because it was incredibly strong and

important in some parts, but in others, merely laborious and repetitive. Let me explain. First, it's important to say from the outset that I think Rabbi Sacks is incredibly learned, maybe a genius, and his facility to weave Biblical texts with those held sacred from the Western canon is always thrilling for this English teacher. Also, as a response to recent works by New Atheists (Sacks's term, not sure if it's pejorative) like Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens (RIP), and Sam Harris, Sacks's defense of the religious life is thoughtful, moderate, respectful, and conducted at low decibel. And though it is an incredibly welcome and needed entry into that discussion, in many ways, Sacks's preoccupation with defending religion against the NA's overtly dismissive diatribes is one of its faults as well. What I mean is that, and maybe I'm wrong here, I don't think that many thinking people believe, as Hitchens claimed, that "religion poisons everything." Emanating from such brilliant minds, it's a startlingly stupid assertion. OBVIOUSLY, one can cherry pick ANY "ism's" most morally deranged followers, most chillingly nationalistic writings, and most violent outliers and claim that the ISM "poisons everything." So Sacks spends far too much of this book arguing that there is something worthwhile, noble, and good, about leading a religious life. He never claims that these are guaranteed, only that throwing out religion altogether, as the NAs would have us do, robs humanity of one its most beautiful creations. One other weakness (and then onto the justification for FOUR stars).

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