Books to Note


This book is not an encyclopedic treatise on how science either supports or refutes biblical accounts. Rather, it is about parallel methods used by scientists and religious authorities, whose inquiries often intersect, in grappling with everyday concerns. According to Hoffmann, a Nobel laureate, and Schmidt, science and religion share similar methods of creative thought; they both are meant to instill awe and wisdom.

*Old Wine, New Flasks* depicts the intertwining of the voices of science and religion, in general, and of chemistry and Judaism, in particular. Thus, along with some good-natured sparring between the authors, the book contains essays, a play, and copies of written correspondence and electronic-mail messages. The authors delight in following a religious injunction to interpret the Torah in all things—in art, music, poetry, textile science, DNA, and even molecular chirality. They go so far as to bring J. H. van't Hoff and Hermann Kolbe into their sometimes amusing anecdotes and observations.

A reader-friendly glossary of Hebrew and Yiddish terms aids those unfamiliar with these expressions. One shortcoming, however, is the use of endnotes, which would be more read and appreciated if linked to the text and not placed at the end of the book.

Zvi C. Koren
*Edelstein Center for the Analysis of Ancient Textiles and Related Artifacts*
*Shenkar College*
*Ramat-Gan, Israel*