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Professor M. Nirenberg
Pontifical Academy of Sciences
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~~_____~~
January 31, 1989

Dear Professor Nirenberg:

As you are well aware, the history of science has periodically been punctuated by fierce battles between scientists and theologians. Several modern scientists and scientific theories, however, have been surprisingly sympathetic to religious issues. I recall that my late teachers/colleagues/friends, Einstein, Schroedinger and Heisenberg, who were all distinguished scientists, had a passionate interest in religious questions. Theories like the Big Bang, black holes, quantum theory, relativity, and the Anthropic Principle have introduced science to a world of awe and mystery that is not far removed from the Ultimate Mystery that drives the religious impulse. These twentieth century trends seem to call for a new metaphor in describing the relationship of science and religion.

Nowhere is the tension between science and religion more pronounced than in the origin issues: the origin of the universe, the origin of life and the origin of homo sapiens. As a scientist and a philosopher of science for over forty years, I have reflected on these questions in my books **FOUNDATIONS OF PHYSICS**, **THE NATURE OF PHYSICAL REALITY** and **THE MIRACLE OF EXISTENCE**.

These issues have now drawn me to an even more extensive exploration. I would like to map modern scientific perspectives on these issues. To this end, I am working on an origins anthology project with a science journalist. This project entails a compilation of views on the three main origin issues from the most noted scientists of the present day.

You would honor me greatly by responding to the questions I have outlined below before ~~_____~~. Your responses will be included in the anthology I will be editing to be titled **ORIGINS: SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVES**. Sir John Eccles, the Nobel Prize winning neurophysiologist who has been described as one of the greatest brain scientists of the century, has kindly agreed to write the foreword to **ORIGINS**.

April 1.

These are the questions to which I would like you to respond:

1. What do you think should be the relationship between religion and science?
2. What is your view on the origin of the universe: both on the scientific level - and if you see the need - on a metaphysical level?
3. What is your view on the origin of life: both on a scientific level - and if you see the need - on a metaphysical level?
4. What is your view on the origin of **homo sapiens**?
5. How should science - and the scientist - approach origin questions, specifically the origin of the universe and the origin of life?
6. Many prominent scientists - including Darwin, Einstein and Planck - have considered the concept of God very seriously. What are your thoughts on the concept of God and on the existence of God?

I look forward to hearing from you. With many thanks.

APR 27 1989

Sincerely,


Henry Margenau