



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Michael Rosenthal



The deeper the question, the closer the truth is probed. This notion seems simple and obvious, but it implies a deeper message. It seems that the essence of anything cannot be fully accessed. The answer to the deepest question will never yield a fully comprehensible essence of the topic of inquiry. I learned this invaluable lesson recently through reading a book entitled Genesis and the Big Bang by Dr. Gerald Schroder.

In his book, Schroder describes the principles on which Einstein's Law of Relativity operate to explain how the Earth can be both billions of years old, as science estimates, and 5770 years old, as the *Torah* indicates. While explaining one of these principles, Schroder writes that it "defies all logic," simply clarifying that the more one thinks about this principle, the more perplexed s/he will become. He then goes on to describe experiments which prove both the Law of Relativity and the principles on which it rests. I personally tried to understand this "illogical" principle, and although I could not fully understand the principle's effects, I could not wrap my head around how this principle could actually be physical fact: it conflicts with everything I knew, or thought I knew, about the world. In essence, the principle is a true, scientifically proven, paradox.

This type of mental struggle is one that many have when it comes to understanding *Hashem* and the purpose of the creation of the world. Personally, I feel that every time a question I have about *Hashem* is answered satisfactorily, I have more knowledge of *Hashem*; and yet, the answer spurs at least one new question. Then the answer to that new question either spurs yet another new question, or is answered with a paradox or contradiction which is truly incomprehensible to the human mind. Although this pattern might seem disheartening, it is, in reality, encouraging. One thing that we know about *Hashem* is that we cannot understand or know anything about His essence. (See what I said about contradictions?) Obviously, trying to fully understand *Hashem*, who is outside the confines of time and space, is as ludicrous as trying to imagine a zero dimensional object. Therefore, the

closer to true knowledge of *Hashem* one gets, the closer one moves toward the incomprehensible, found many times in the form of a contradiction.

Even though we will never fully grasp *Hashem's* essence, we can still understand the "effects" of *Hashem* – ourselves. Similar to how I could understand the Law of Relativity without understanding how its principle physically operates, we must learn to understand ourselves and our purpose without fully understanding our Creator. I think that the *Torah* is written "in the language of man" in the sense that the function of the *Torah* is to serve as a guide for mankind to understand itself and its purpose. This is why the *Torah* is such a grand gift: it is, essentially, *Hashem's* Guide to Self-Discovery and Self-Actualization for Dummies. All we have to do is learn it.