



# The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World

By Paul Davies

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## The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World By Paul Davies

Throughout history, humans have dreamed of knowing the reason for the existence of the universe. In *The Mind of God*, physicist Paul Davies explores whether modern science can provide the key that will unlock this last secret. In his quest for an ultimate explanation, Davies reexamines the great questions that have preoccupied humankind for millennia, and in the process explores, among other topics, the origin and evolution of the cosmos, the nature of life and consciousness, and the claim that our universe is a kind of gigantic computer. Charting the ways in which the theories of such scientists as Newton, Einstein, and more recently Stephen Hawking and Richard Feynman have altered our conception of the physical universe. Davies puts these scientists' discoveries into context with the writings of philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, Hume, and Kant. His startling conclusion is that the universe is "no minor byproduct of mindless, purposeless forces. We are truly meant to be here." By the means of science, we can truly see into the mind of God.

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## The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World By Paul Davies Bibliography

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**Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

This time Davies (coauthor of *The Matter Myth*, LJ 3/1/92) takes on the big philosophical questions raised by our increasing understanding of how the universe works: How did it all start? Why is there a universe at all? Is there a God and, if so, has He/She any limitations? That is, could the laws of physics have been different? Who made the laws? Why are we here? Could there be a universe devoid of life? Many people feel that these issues fall into the realm of religion, not science. The message of Davies's book is that most of these questions are unanswerable but only people with an appreciation of modern science can understand how deep they really are. Davies is an excellent writer about science per se and its philosophical implications. A worthwhile acquisition for all science collections.

- *Harold D. Shane, Baruch Coll., CUNY*

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From Kirkus Reviews

Are we but ideas in the mind of God? Platonic forms in one of many infinite universes? Davies (Theoretical Physics/Univ. of Adelaide, Australia; co-author, *The Matter Myth*, p. 1510, etc.) increasingly assumes the mantle of metaphysician as he probes once again theories of origin and destiny, space and time, and creation by design or chance. Some of this tracks familiar Davies ground: a reprise of Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas and Newton, Hoyle and Hawking. Quarks and GUT theories are revisited, as are chaos theory and quantum cosmology. But what makes this exercise different is the extent to which Davies probes computer science and mathematics to develop extraordinarily rich concepts of the nature of complexity. These chapters deal not only with the paradoxes inherent in self-reflecting systems and Godel's proofs of undecidability in mathematics but relate these famous theorems to Turing's universal machines and the nature of "computable" vs. "noncomputable" numbers. The upshot of all this lofty discourse is the idea that the laws of physics (or nature) are "computable" and that the universe lends itself to simulation, given a universal computer. The more enthusiastic mathematicians exploring these ideas are prepared to say that such computers reveal the organized complexity of the universe, are capable of self-replication, and are therefore alive. Davies concludes that maybe the ultimate answer cannot be obtained through reason but only through mysticism, and he again states his conviction that we are truly meant to be here.... That's not necessarily the conclusion all readers will reach, but the mathematical excursions make this latest Davies volume of more than passing interest. -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

"Re-examine[s] the great questions of existence...and in the process it also provides an entertaining and provocative tour of recent developments in theoretical physics." -- Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

"Intellectually cordial and wonderfully lucid.... Meanders through dozens of current concepts and findings...and then observes how they illuminate the ancient quandaries encountered by Plato and Pythagoras, Spinoza and Kant.... [A] mind-bending experience." -- *The Washington Post*

"Provide[s] cogent explications of some of the most interesting ideas to have arisen from contemporary physics, mathematics and philosophy...full of ideas...mighty nourishing." -- Timothy Ferris, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Stimulating and enlightening...Shows how scientists, like the ancient philosophers before them, continue to

struggle with reconciling the eternal and the ephemeral." -- *The New York Times Book Review*

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