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“This **brilliantly-argued** book takes science into novel territory with clarity and conviction, and in Kauffman’s inimitable style it **challenges some scientific taboos**. With this book a new biology is emerging, and with it a new culture.” —Brian Goodwin, co-author of *Signs of Life: How Complexity Pervades Biology*

“This is a **brilliant, new, comprehensive, scientific world-picture**, and it deserves a wide reading in the educated public.” —Gordon D. Kaufman, Mallinckrodt Professor of Divinity, Emeritus, Harvard University

## **REINVENTING THE SACRED: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion By Stuart A. Kauffman**

Reductionism – the philosophy based on the work of Galileo, Newton, and their followers that everything can ultimately be understood in terms of particles in motion – has been the basis of our scientific worldview for nearly 400 years and is the foundation of modern secular society. Yet, can a couple in love walking along the banks of the Seine really be reduced to the interactions of fundamental particles? Can societies really be explained by laws about people, which in turn can be explained by laws about organs, then cells, then biochemistry, chemistry, and particle physics?

They cannot, argues Stuart A. Kauffman in his revolutionary new book, **REINVENTING THE SACRED: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion (Basic Books; May 12, 2008)**. The founding director of the Institute for Biocomplexity and Informatics at the University of Calgary and a pioneer in complexity theory, Kauffman shows why reductionism is an inadequate theory to explain the infinite possibilities of the evolution of the biosphere, human economic life, and human history. Instead, he offers a radical new worldview: the natural universe contains a ceaseless creativity that simply can’t be predicted. It is this creativity in the cosmos – not a supernatural “Creator God” – that should be viewed as divine. “I believe we can reinvent the sacred,” Kauffman writes. “We can invent a global ethic, in a shared space, safe to all of us, with one view of God as the natural creativity in the universe.”

Kauffman asserts that it is time to break the “Galilean spell” – the faith that all aspects of the natural world are governed by natural laws – that has driven science for the past four centuries. With examples ranging from DNA and cell differentiation to Darwinian preadaptation, consciousness, and human technological advances, he argues that not everything that happens in the universe is governed by natural laws. “The evolution of the biosphere, human economic life, and human history are partially indescribable by natural law,” he writes.

Further, science alone simply doesn’t have the ability to predict the complex processes that occur every day. According to Kauffman, we do not lack sufficient knowledge or wisdom to predict the future evolution of the biosphere, economy, or human culture. Rather, it is that these things are *inherently* beyond prediction. “We live in an emergent universe in which ceaseless unforeseeable creativity arises and surrounds us,” writes Kauffman. “And since we can neither prestate, let alone predict all that will happen, reason alone is an insufficient guide to living our lives forward.”

But if natural law doesn’t suffice to describe the evolution of the biosphere, of technological evolution, of human history, what does? “In its place is a wondrous radical creativity without a supernatural Creator,” says Kauffman. He concludes with an examination of a new global ethic. “If we reinvent the sacred to mean the wonder of the creativity in the universe, biosphere, human history, and culture, are we not inevitably invited to honor all of life and the planet that sustains it?” he asks.

An ambitious and groundbreaking new look at science and our world, **REINVENTING THE SACRED** will forever alter our understanding of science itself.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

**Stuart A. Kauffman** is well-known for his research in theoretical biology and as a pioneer in the field of complexity theory. He is the founding director of the Institute for Biocomplexity and Informatics, which conducts leading-edge interdisciplinary research in systems biology, and a professor at the University of Calgary. During the 1990s he rose to prominence through his key role at the Santa Fe Institute, where he is currently External Professor. His previous books include *The Origins of Order* and *At Home in the Universe: The Search for the Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity*. He lives in Calgary, Canada.

#### **ABOUT THE BOOK:**

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**By Stuart A. Kauffman**

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