Mathematicians' Statement on the Bible Codes

We are making this statement concerning what have been called "Bible codes" or "Torah codes". We recognize that many sincere people take this phenomenon seriously, which compels us to speak out on the basis of what our mathematical training tells us about the evidence claimed for this alleged phenomenon.

There is a common belief in the general community to the effect that many mathematicians, statisticians, and other scientists consider the claims to be credible. This belief is incorrect. On the contrary, the almost unanimous opinion of those in the scientific world who have studied the question is that the theory is without foundation. The signatories to this letter have themselves examined the evidence and found it entirely unconvincing.

We refer in particular to the paper Equidistant Letter Sequences in the Book of Genesis, published in Statistical Science in 1994. This experiment suffers from major problems concerning both its execution and the interpretation of its conclusions. Even without these concerns, we would not take such extraordinary claims seriously without a vastly more systematic and thorough investigation. No such investigation has been carried out, nor has the work so far established a prima facie case. In addition, word clusters such as mentioned in Witztum's and Drosnin's books and the so called messianic codes are an uncontrolled phenomenon and similar clusters will be found in any text of similar length. All claims of incredible probabilities for such clusters are bogus, since they are computed contrary to standard rules of probability and statistics.

Among the signatories below are some who believe that the Torah was divinely written. We see no conflict between that belief and the opinion we have expressed above.

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Who can sign?

All the individuals whose names appear above hold PhDs in Mathematics or Statistics or are faculty members in a Department of Mathematics or Statistics at a college or university. Anyone who meets this criterion and wants to add their name to this petition should send email to Barry Simon at <u>bsimon@bigfoot.com</u>.