

Abandoning Myth

Reason and observation - THINKING ABOUT THE WORLD

Key Points:

Myth vs. Nature

- **Myth (Left side):**

Before the **Milesian philosophers**, ancient Greeks believed that **natural events** (like storms) were caused by the **gods**. This was a **mythological explanation**, based on religion and storytelling.

- **Nature (Right side):**

The **Milesians** (early Greek philosophers) rejected these myths. They believed that such stories were **irrational** and that natural events could be explained through **reason** and **observation**, without involving gods.

"Abandoning Myth"

This section explains the historical shift in thinking:

- The **first Western philosophers** lived in **Miletus** (a city in ancient Greece) in the **6th century BCE**.
 - The **Milesian school** questioned the belief in gods and instead proposed that the universe is governed by **natural order**.*
 - They tried to discover the **arche** (Greek for "principle" or "origin")—the **fundamental substance or principle** that explains everything.
 - This rational and observational approach laid the foundation for **modern science*** and **philosophy**.
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Quote by Thales of Miletus:

"Intellect is the swiftest of things, for it runs through everything."*

This reflects the idea that **reason** and **thought** are powerful tools for understanding the world.

Summary:

Greek thinkers moved from using **myths** to explain the world to using **reason, observation, and logic**—a shift that was essential to the development of science and philosophy.

 **"The Milesian school questioned the belief in gods and instead proposed that the universe is governed by natural order":**

In ancient times, people believed that gods controlled everything in nature—storms, earthquakes, seasons, etc. If there was thunder, they thought a god was angry.

But the **Milesian school** (a group of early Greek philosophers from the city of **Miletus**) started to **question this belief**. They asked:

"What if natural events happen because of laws or patterns in nature, not because of gods?"

Instead of relying on **myths**, they looked for **natural explanations** using:

- **Observation** (watching the world closely)
- **Reason** (thinking logically)

They believed that the **universe follows a natural order**—a system or set of rules that could be understood by studying the world, not by telling stories about gods.

Example:

Instead of saying:

- "Lightning happens because Zeus is angry,"

They might ask:

- "What causes lightning in the sky? Can we find a pattern or a reason in nature?"
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Why This Matters:

This was a **big shift in human thinking**—it marked the beginning of **science and philosophy**, where people started to study the world in a logical, evidence-based way.

🌟 Why is it called **Modern Science** instead of just "Science"?

The term "**modern science**" is used to:

Distinguish today's science from earlier forms of knowledge like ancient science, philosophy, or myth-based explanations.



1. Historical Difference

- **Ancient science** (like in ancient Greece, India, China, Egypt) was often mixed with:
 - Religion or mythology
 - Philosophy or guesswork
 - Limited observation and tools
 - **Modern science** (starting around the 16th–17th century CE) is based on:
 - Careful **experiments**
 - **Mathematics**
 - **Technology** and instruments (like microscopes, telescopes)
 - A repeatable process: the **scientific method**
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2. Major Turning Point

We call it **modern** because it developed during the **Scientific Revolution** (1500s–1700s), with scientists like:

- **Galileo Galilei**
- **Isaac Newton**
- **Francis Bacon**
- **René Descartes**

They created a **new way of thinking** about the world—one that became the foundation of science today.

3. Science Today vs. the Past

Ancient Knowledge	Modern Science
Based on myths, beliefs, or tradition	Based on experiments and data
Not always tested or repeatable	Must be testable and repeatable
Often explained by gods or magic	Explained by natural laws (physics, biology, etc.)

In Summary:

We say "**modern science**" to highlight that it's a **new, more reliable way of understanding the world**, different from earlier methods that were based more on belief than on evidence.

"Intellect is the swiftest of things, for it runs through everything."

— *Thales of Miletus*

Who was Thales?


Thales (around **624–546 BCE**) was a **pre-Socratic philosopher** and one of the first to explain the world using **reason and observation**, rather than mythology.

He's considered the **father of Western philosophy and science**.

Understanding the Quote

"Intellect is the swiftest of things"

- "**Intellect**" refers to the **human mind**, the power of **thinking, reasoning, and understanding**.
- Thales says it's the **fastest** thing — **faster than light, wind, or movement**, because:
 - The mind can instantly imagine things anywhere.
 - We can think about distant stars, the past, the future, even things we've never seen.
 - Nothing physical can travel as fast as thought.

 Example: You can think about a galaxy millions of light-years away — instantly!

"For it runs through everything"

- The **intellect** can:
 - **Understand** all aspects of nature — stars, water, animals, seasons, etc.
 - **Explore** any part of the universe — no physical boundaries stop it.
 - **Connect ideas** across different areas — science, art, philosophy, ethics.

This part shows that Thales believed **reason** or **thought** is what helps us **grasp the entire universe**. It's like a tool that can reach and explain everything — unlike myths, which are limited to stories.

Why This Is Important:

This quote shows the **early Greek shift from myth to reason**. Thales believed that:

- The **mind**, not myths, is the key to understanding reality.

- **Thinking** and **reasoning** are the most powerful human tools.

He inspired future philosophers (like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) to value **intellectual discovery** over superstition.

In Short:

Thales is saying that our **intellect (mind)** is the **fastest and most powerful force** we have — it can reach any place, understand anything, and unlock the secrets of the universe.