

Nourishment for the Neshama

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BMI - Body Me Index (B MY) - We have real free will to bring in Hashem's middos instead

Rabbi Tzadok Cable gives a class on NeFesh HaChaim, Below is a correspondence with him based on the idea of what it means to be a tzelem elokim and the real free will power we have to bring middos Harachamim into this world and create positive influence. We may have to strain our intellect, or restrain as the case may be, but we are empowered to really do this!

S "I have the idea that if I am a universe in my essence and I see my struggles with duality and continuously attempt to do teshuva and strive to draw Hashem's attributes into the area of darkness, the deserts of my kelpas, that drawing middos harachamim in is purposeful not only for resolving inner disempowerment, but more importantly as an opportunity for me to partner with Hashem when I give sincere forgiveness and mercy to others, hopefully opening up a channel of Hashem's forgiveness upon us. In so doing, by touching Hashem's midda, I receive the pleasurable benefit of being part of that connection. I am understanding that I can indeed direct that rachamim, for example if I see a confused person hurting me, I can bear the burden of their confusion and unify Hashem's name by instead of expressing natural reactions ask for middos harachamim to help us all repair the confusion Adam's sin caused.

It seems to be working."

RC "It probably is working. BUT it only works because the platform exists for us to choose to relate to the tachtonim as our realm from which to either turn away from Hashem, build it up and elevate it to be a reflection of the higher malchus, or to bring down Hashem's attributes into it.

If you wouldn't have that platform then no matter how much you would try to make our world into the place where Hashem dwells it would have no meaning and would give no appreciation, because you would just be a machine that wouldn't have choice.

My point is that you can't get the true honor (which is what Hashem really wants you to have) without this potential to live in the lower realm as mine, and without realizing that down here Hashem has left me the room to decide how to make my realm look. Once you are real with that than you can have tremendous meaning and success at bringing down the middos. "

S "So the fact that the platform is there plus free will invalidates the position " we are not on that level?"

It seems Hashem had been cooking in the "body me index (B MY by coincidence) a huge potential fuel to break out of this golus if we choose to take our next step toward bringing middos harachamim into the world. We surely are on the level of choosing even if we are 300 lbs overweight in body me index"

RC "It doesn't invalidate the position we are not on that level as long as a person is still genuinely aware of

the highest levels and is engaged in the process of getting there (even if it will take a thousand years).

S: Engaged in the process gets wiped out though because hearing we are not on that level give our natural yetzer hara's resistance to transcendence all it needs to convince us that it must be out of reach, that we are just the grasshoppers the spies told us we were.. A learned woman in a Rabbinic family was trying to forgive someone for something that a person did not ask mechila for, just so she could let it go, it had to do with a slander against a family member, so it was serious. She asked a shaila to a prominent posek and was told we are not on that level. So she is bearing a grudge and not trying to forgive, even as she moves on. She has made a compartment for it in her heart, and a piece of her is now trapped there and creating destruction on some level.

This matter of engaged in the process of reaching the higher level, even if it takes 1000 years, is key to blasting out of golus, using as the fuel all the power stuck in the Body Me Index, the B MY everything focus.

RC "Rav Dessler says that someone who is genuine and sincerely engaged will not get wiped out, he may be set back temporarily but will come back. Only those who aren't genuinely engaged get knocked out permanently.

S: This all needs broader publicity in my view. It could be that many have not internalized this important element, that is, being genuinely aware of the highest levels and being engaged in the process of getting there (even if it will take a thousand years).

RC: Michtav Elyahu, book 3, pages 170 to 175 (update: in the Hebrew version)

I found pages 170-175 in English and printed it below, at the time I did not know that Rav was referring to Hebrew. As soon as I have a translation of the Hebrew into English I will post.

Meanwhile, here is a summary of the concept from: <http://www.shemayisrael.co.il/parsha/dimension/archives/mishpatim60.htm>

Man has the ability to determine the level of Divine providence and intervention he will see in his own life.

Every man lives in his own world, a spiritual dimension of his own creation. For this reason, man is referred to as a 'Tzelem Elokim' - the Biblical name of Creation - for he manifests the image of G-d as Creator.

Man lives with his own G-d, and if he chooses to ignore Heaven's hand, aware only of the chance circumstance of a natural world, G-d will deal with him accordingly, revealing a universe that operates by chance, subject to the random whims of statistical occurrence.

On the other hand, the man who is aware of G-d's omnipotent control, who recognizes all failure and pain as a Divine call to improve his ways, will deserve a clear and direct relationship with Hashem. His prayers will be answered and his repentance noted.

It is little wonder then, that present day skeptics can openly deny G-d's presence. Having opted to play the percentages, providence mirrors their choice, a cruel world of innocent victims, where nature knows no favorites.

Below is pages 170 to 175 from the English version, which I posted and then Rav Cable told me that the pages in the Hebrew version are not that. I am leaving it up because although it is not the same section it speaks to bringing ourselves toward a divine call to improve our ways

Will post the Hebrew ASAP that Rav Cable refers to above:

The self-deception involved in raising the problem of causality versus free will

We have explained at length in "The Roots of Mussar" that before one has gained control of one's middot and subjected them to the pure striving for truth, his opinions cannot possibly be true. He sees only what he wants to see and arrives at those conclusions which he desires. He is bribed by his middot and is partial to

his desires. "Bribery blinds the eyes of the wise" is an immutable law.

This is why we sometimes find clever people delving into difficult philosophic problems and coming up with acute and sophisticated results, while the critical observer can detect that the solutions have been arrived at on the basis of unconscious bias. It may have been at work, subtly influencing the reasoning process. Sometimes people may hold contradictory opinions at different times, as it suits their purpose and bias. One may be completely convinced that his conclusions are based on pure logic while actually they stem from pure self-deception.

There is no area of thought where this is more evident than in the case of "free will versus determinism." There were and still are great philosophers who, because of this problem, have denied the reality of free will and human responsibility. They assert that man is but a plaything in the hands of natural causes, and any idea he may have of claiming credit for his actions is purely illusory. But at the same time the same person will, in the most egoistic manner possible, take pride in his intellectual achievements and claim credit for his professional success. And here the critic must raise his eyebrows. How can the thinker have forgotten so soon that he has just demonstrated, to his own and other people's satisfaction, that many is nothing but a machine, a stimulus-response mechanism? Can a machine claim credit for its predetermined activities? This only goes to show how people dominated by their bias cannot be trusted. Their unconscious bias determines their opinions; truth takes second place. This is hardly what we mean by objective thinking and the sincere search for truth.

This attitude is quite widespread and is by no means confined to philosophers. If a person does something for which others applaud him, he will have no hesitation in taking all the glory for himself. But if he commits a crime and is found out, his ego suddenly takes a back seat. If all else fails, he will try to avoid responsibility by hiding behind a deterministic shield. That is how philosophic problems can be used to promote a permissive life style. And of course, with characteristic inconsistency the same person will claim credit for his "discovery," which he knows will be applauded by all like-minded people.

But this tactic is not new. Already some eight centuries ago Rabbi Bahya wrote in his classic *Duties of the Heart*:

The yetzer hara will cast you into the sea of doubts concerning the problem of determinism and personal responsibility. When he sees that you are inclined to deviate from the path of true service...he will try to convince you with cogent arguments that all human action is predetermined...so as to lessen your personal responsibility...If he notices that you are pursuing some mundane, material goal, he will encourage you to pursue it by all means, saying: don't slacken your efforts; it all depends on you;...you can achieve it if you want to. Success or failure is in your hands; exert yourself to the full; you will certainly attain all your desire of the pleasures of the world. So the yetzer reverses his arguments at will; sometimes adopting a deterministic approach and at other times an approach based on the effectiveness of human action; with the sole object of confusing you and drawing you along the path *he* (the yetzer hara) wishes you to follow.