

Nourishment for the Neshama

<http://lvracha.com>

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More on the corpus callosum and free will in thought

"The importance of being able to efficiently pass information from one half of the brain to the other is vital. The corpus callosum is much like a road between to busy cities. The better the road, the more information, wealth and trade will flow between the cities. "

Learning Torah builds the nerve connections between the left analytical brain and the right creative Imaginative brain. The faster and more ways these sides can communicate, the more we can bring into this world. Thus, being aware of what keeps us from building these nerve connections becomes of interest.

"The right and left side of your brain are responsible not only for controlling the left and right parts of your body, but specialize in processing different types of information. The left side uses logic, facts and rules. It governs language and words, math and science, pattern and order. The right side uses feeling, it sees the big picture, it recognizes symbols and images. The right side processes spatial perception, and object function. The right side allows us to imagine possibilities. .. By strengthening the corpus callosum, we are bringing together the dreamer and the doer

<http://kristin-senseofwonder.blogspot.com/2012/02/criss-cross-applesauce-cross-lateral.html>

What happens if we get "stuck" in left brain? Our minds spin in analytical thinking that may not really produce anything but frustration and despair. What helps us open up our mind to other possibilities? Firstly, to remove the feeling of stress, of being overloaded more than we can process. At this moment in our challenge, it can be very worthwhile to reach upwards for a Torah Ideal, for doing so means that we are imagining possibilities and yet we can trust Torah to not just be imagination, but actual truth. With our minds reaching back and forth from the challenge to the Torah Ideal, we build and strengthen nerve pathways.

How many of us when we feel challenged or verbally attacked forget Torah values? In the heat of the moment, I imagine most of us have a human nature reaction. Yet with an understanding that the goal is NOT to animate that human nature reaction but rather to utilize the opportunity to bring light to the matter, our relationship with ourselves and with others begins to take a new form, which is the reality that at all times we are attempting to bring into our moments a deeper relationship with Hashem, His Torah and His Will. This does not obviate the need to follow the Torah prohibitions regarding onaas devarim - we can see how damaging abusive hurtful language is, it throws us and although possible to recover, it is very hard to fight our way back. How do we regain our balance?

Let's say someone verbally assaults me. This creates a human reaction that pulls me from a balanced state into what I will call "me-brane". That means, for the moment, I forgot I am made b'tzelem elokim. I may experience discomfort, feel wounded, afraid, or angry, concerned about what is happening due to external stimulation. My thoughts wander to what is happening from a ME perspective, and if I continue on that path, then I begin to attempt to analyze and react mostly from a database of appropriate and inappropriate reactions to which I have been socialized. Most socialization is built on respect for the ME, the human ME. To the extent we feel satisfied with such values, the matter may end. Unfortunately, there are often situations that are not brought to a satisfying resolution based on societally accepted standards of appropriate and inappropriate. The reason mostly is that there is subjective good and bad and it can often become a power struggle based on very subjective values that are not Torah values. (Such we see in the current government shutdown. Need I say more?)

How do we regain a balanced state? It is by injecting into our thoughts and values an absolute truth, from Torah. We are made in the image of Hashem and ultimately we must remember that we are here to do His Will over our will. We are here to bring malchus into this world. That means drawing on the Source of all vitality, Torah, and lovingly submitting to His Will and shining His attributes of mercy, lovingkindness, forgiveness, bearing the burden of Adam's sin, casting sins into the sea, being respectful and loving and serving a higher truth that is a Torah value. Unless we have a Torah value at the pinnacle of our thinking, we are going deeper and deeper into Me-brane, getting angry or thinking about our subjective good and bad distinctions. Even if we think our subjective value is right, we remember that the fire burning inside of the ME can burn out the lower level thinking and help us move closer to the corpus callosum so that we can bring a Torah principle to the matter. At this point, we may feel much calmer. Let it absorb into the earthiness of our hearts and as the love for Hashem blossoms with the calmness, may we be strengthened in moving with Hashem's will over our initial reaction.

Injecting malchus into Me-brane, brings us back to MEMbrane, which reminds us of the goal, to utilize the nerve pathways of the corpus callosum to come up with a Torah true imaginative solution. With the value of tzelem elokim back into the picture, we have re-gained the imaginative possibilities of bringing Torah values to the situation. In fact, the feeling of calmness and clarity and powerful joy when we are able to do this are the pleasure we are created for. It is a far greater pleasure than whatever earthly pleasure the external challenge presents to us.

Understand the universal purpose for which Hashem creates us - to give us the chance to use free will in the area of thought, to choose which of our thoughts to bring into action in this world. The thoughts we can choose can be based in Torah and Hashem's attributes of mercy, thereby experiencing the pleasure in this world that He wishes to give along with building the heavens and meriting olam haba. It is our choice! We have real free will. Adam had real free will. It is up to us in our generation to repair based on all of human history the mistake in the use of free will that Adam made. Our souls are part of Nishmas Yisrael. We are the descendants of Avraham Avelnu and Sarah Imelnu, of Yitzchok and Rivka, of Yaakov and Leah and Rochel. That universal truth is our primary identity.

Thank you Hashem for all the ways You make our lives feel good and taste good, may our service to You be pleasing and may our choice to bring Your Will into olam have tilt the scales for You to bring the ultimate redemption.

More on the Corpus Callosum

Corpus Callusum – the membrane that connects the left and right lobes of the brain. the corpus callosum is located underneath the cerebrum at the center of the brain

Wikipedia defines it as: "a wide, flat bundle of neural fibers beneath the cortex in the eutherian brain at the longitudinal fissure. It connects the left and right cerebral hemispheres and facilitates interhemispheric

communication. It is the largest white matter structure in the brain, consisting of 200–250 million contralateral axonal projections. The corpus callosum transfers motor, sensory, and cognitive information between the brain hemispheres.

The corpus callosum is the curved band of lighter tissue at the center of the brain above the hypothalamus. Its lighter texture is due to higher myelin content, resulting in faster neuronal impulse transmission."

It has been found that the Corpus Callosum was larger in professional musicians than in non-musicians. Playing instruments involves a lot of cross hemisphere processing to keep both hand's movements in time with each other. This suggests that by regular practice beginning early in life the Corpus Callosum can be strengthened

*When Einstein died they did an autopsy on his brain to see how it was different than the average person's brain? What they found was incredible. There was no major difference in size or structure. **The only difference they noted was in the size of the corpus callosum, the muscle that transmits information between the sides (left and right) of the brain. Einstein's was larger than the average person's. Since it is a muscle, they figured he had exercised it more...used it more...than others do. The corpus callosum stops growing at about the age of 25 years. This implies that as a child and young adult Einstein exercised his brain, thus building the muscle to a size and stature that would be of use in his later years, when he constructed his special theories concerning gravity, energy, and their relationship to space-time. (When asked what he attributed his unique vision to he stated that he felt his greatest gift was the ability to "Imagine"... definitely a right-brained activity!)***