

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Primal Will, Search for the Knowledge of Gd, Spiritual Infrastructure and the Red sea – A wake up call to action for those yearning for Moshiach

May learning from this essay be a merit for a refuah shelama gedola for Rabbi Aryeh Leib David Nivin, www.newchabura.com

In Parsha Beshalach, the Meam Loez tells us that when the Israelites stood at the Red Sea, the Sea refused to split. The angel of the sea poskined as follows: Since the Israelites had worshipped physical idols and had immersed themselves in the physical, they had made their bodies preminent. The sea therefore preceded them in order of creation and [declared that it] did not have to split before them.

Hashem judged that the Jewish people, although idol worshippers in Egypt, only did so after their minds had become **totally confused because of their subjugation**. Gd told the genius of the sea that Israelites are destined to accept Torah and for this reason alone they deserved the miracle even though they were not worthy. The angel of the sea saw Hashem and fled.

The Israelites ,by succumbing to their lower bodily and emotional drives, were saved from the Egyptians only because Hashem, in His Wisdom and Mercy, judged them favorably and saw what they would become. He judged that they were not rebellious, just captivated by lower thinking because of their subjugation.

How can we today, when our minds are exposed to so many examples of emotional wielding powerful tactics, make certain that we do not adopt from the emotional manipulation of accusers, distorters and enemies of Jewish values? **We can look to zechus Avos and Imos for the answer – search for the knowledge of Gd and serve the One true Gd for there is nothing but the simple unity of Hashem in all the world.**

When we take a closer look at the environment and times in which our ancestors lived, we see abuse, emotional manipulation, and grossly immoral conduct – Terach, Bethuel, and Laban all great examples of this. **The search for the knowledge of Gd is the value that Abraham, Rivka, Rachel and Leah are praised for choosing and upholding when the Torah tells us that they did not learn from the abusers and manipulators of their day. They were Yashar Kail, straight for Hashem. Their desire was to do Hashem's will without attachment to any outcome, knowing that 100% of success is in the hands of Hashem and that everything that Hashem does is for our ultimate good.**

May the merit of their holiness inspire us and bring us redemption. In today's world, seeing how easily our souls can come to serve the body and the desiring emotions – whatever we want, whenever we want, with whomever we want, as much as we want - we see just how great and holy our Avos and Imos were, **may their memory be a zechus.**

But more, when Hashem looks at the Jewish people today, who does He see as being someone to count as searching for the knowledge of Gd as did our Avos and Imas? When we look at our inner motivations, do we see zechus Avos and Imos or, honestly, do we see that we would rather take using values and powerful strategies of today [e.g. from the use of emotional manipulation and spiritual ignorance]?

The place of the world is entirely within the mind of Hashem. Do we really know the full consequences of what we are doing? How do we measure success? While we may calculate into our actions our needs and even our values, have we also considered our impact on the spiritual realities in this world, the very realities we take for granted, such as sunlight, wind, peace, health, well-being and all of the details that are out of our immediate control?

Can we see by the darkness in societies today that perhaps it is time to investigate a wider circle of concern for the consequences of our choices? Perhaps we shall coin a phrase for this – spiritual environmentalists!

Gd willed that **man should be able to choose freely between good and evil**, and therefore made man absolutely independent in this respect. With free will man truly has self-determination.

The Ramchal in Derech Hashem (see below) tells us that the spiritual infrastructure of the world includes indeterministic influence, [which] is the result of man's **free will** here in the physical world... every time a physical thing is influenced **[by our choices]**, it also has an effect on its counter part among these Forces. **[Since man's deeds in the world below are what influence these Forces on high] man's influence is said to be directed upward.**

It is necessary to realize that the true cause of everything good, whether among the Forces or their effects, is the Light of G's Presence. The cause of all evil, on the other hand, is the absence of this Light....

Gd's creation - free will - is built into a person. What we choose to do with it is called the primal will of each person.

Rabbi Nivin, in his module on primal will **[may the continued learning of this wisdom be a zechus for his refuah shelama]** teaches from the Rav Wolbe, the Vilna Gaon, and the Chazon Ish how primal will operates within us. Here is a summary:

Rav Wolbe in his maamar on Ratzon tells us that there is one central power in man= Ratzon (primal will). If we can channel our primal will to Hashem, and ratzon Hashem, all the powers of our neshama will follow after that. Not only that, but there is a promise that in the way a man wants to go, in that way he will be led. The Sefer Hayashar who says that this concept of primal will is the closest thing to the creation itself. Rav Wolbe comments on that and says that if you get your primal will into Hashem or to Ratzon Hashem, just that alone means you are the closest thing to the creator. Whatever you really want, that is what you will achieve, and what you will achieve shows what you really wanted.

The Vilna Gaon: Primal will is hidden from us, and is subconscious. Whatever is our primal will, we will rationalize and say that it is pure and straight in our eyes. He describes it that we have a higher primal will that is pure and straight and as it filters down into our personality it can get hijacked and corrupted. Our goal is to take our subconscious primal will which might not be so pure and channel it back into the will of Hashem.

The Chazon Ish adds that the Chochmai Hamussar divided things into different middos because in that way they would heal people. Really there is only one good middah and one bad middah. The bad middah is "neglecting our natural life in the natural way"- to be emotional without roping it in. The good middah is the total commitment to choosing the ethical way over the desire of emotions. The Chazon Ish adds that it needs to be total, not halfway, and if you do get totally dedicated in every moment you will hate every bad middah at once.

Rav Wolbe is bringing this to get to the concept of generic thinking. We are trying to get to plug into your primal will that is high, generic and global. If you do that you will globally come to kedusha instead of dealing with details.

There is nothing but the simple unity of Hashem at all times and in all places. Gd wants our mind to be challenged to choose between the body and the soul. Our body acts as a barrier to this knowledge, to our ability to notice Him. The more we shine the soul beyond the bodily needs, we elevate the bodily needs [and creation]

We are living in times where we can actually see proof of these spiritual concepts in today's world.

Take a look at the darkness around us. Where does it come from? Are we capitalizing on our knowledge of emotional influence for the purpose of power, politics, and societal pressures? If so, do we not see the actual consequence of doing so in today's world? **What seems like good politics is revealed to be a choice that brings the absence of Light.** Have we influenced the indeterminate forces with our free will truly for our ultimate good by borrowing from powerful emotional tactics even though they may deviate from the laws of lashon hara, love your fellow Jew, do not bear a grudge and more? Perhaps we can wake ourselves up and see that we,, through our [subconscious or conscious] choices to live within our emotions and dominate, have polluted the waters [by creating indeterminate forces] and perhaps we can all take a good look back into the Torah to sharpen our pencils and find out how to give as the Divine gives and how to appeal to Hashem for the sake of relationship and acknowledgment of His Oneness, how to build a relationship with Hashem Who grants all success. And may we quickly align our primal will to do Hashem's will rather than implementing our will through the use of dominating tactics that help us to take what we think is good through unified will..

Relevant excerpts from Chapter 5 of Derech Hashem appear below:

Spiritual Realm

"...the spiritual consists of all entities which are not physical and which cannot be detected by physical means. These in turn are also divided into two categories: souls and transcendental beings... Transcendental beings comprise a class of spiritual entities that are not created to be put into physical bodies. These in turn are also divided into two categories. The first category consists of Forces (Kochos) and the second of Angels...

...Spiritual concepts...are outside of our realm of experience and therefore cannot be adequately described. When we speak of spiritual entities and phenomena, we must therefore rely completely on the traditions handed down to us...

One of these fundamentals is that everything in the physical world has a counterpart among the transcendental Forces. Every entity and process in the physical world is linked to these Forces, following a system decreed by Gd's wisdom. These forces are therefore the roots of all physical things, and everything in the physical world is a branch and result of these Forces. The physical and the spiritual are thus bound together like links in a chain.

We also know from tradition that every physical entity and process is under the charge of some type of angel. These angels have the responsibility of maintaining the natural order, as well as bringing about changes, according to Gd's decree.

The existence and state of being of the physical universe thus emanate from these highest Forces and are dependent upon them. Whatever exists in the physical world is a result of something that takes place among these forces. ...These Forces were the first things created and they were arranged in various systems and placed in different domains...the existence, state, arrangement, and other phenomena involving physical things in turn depend on what is transmitted and reflected to them by these Forces, following the essential nature of these physical entities.

According to this principle, every physical phenomenon originates among these highest Forces. There is, however one exception to this rule, and that includes all things that depend on man's free will. **Gd willed that man should be able to choose freely between good and evil, and therefore made man absolutely independent in this respect.** Man was thus given the power to influence the world and its creatures in any manner his free will desires.

The world therefore contains two opposite general influences. The first is that of natural determinism, while the second is indeterministic.

The deterministic influence is directed downward from on high, while the indeterministic is directed upward from below...**the indeterministic influence,, is the result of man's free will here in the physical**

world.

...Because of the linkage between the physical world and the highest Forces, every time a physical thing is influenced, it also has an effect on its counter part among these Forces. [Since man's deeds in the world below are what influence these Forces on high] man's influence is said to be directed upward. It is thus the exact opposite of the natural deterministic influences.

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...even man's deeds are not all the result of his free will. While this is true of most of his actions, there are some that result from a Divine decree to reward or punish him,...

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...Nevertheless [even in such cases] the elements resulting from the individual's own free will are still directed upward,...

Gd arranged things so that every matter falling within the realm of man's free will should be able to affect the transcendental Forces through this indeterministic influence according to the measure and degree set forth by Gd. This is true not only of man's deeds, but even of his speech and thoughts. The amount and degree of this influence, however, cannot exceed the limits decreed and circumscribed by the Highest Wisdom.

Every indeterministic influence, however, also results in deterministic influences. When the highest Forces are influenced by man's free will, they in turn influence the physical things that are inherently linked to them...

It is necessary to realize that the true cause of everything good, whether among the Forces or their effects, is the Light of G's Presence. The cause of all evil, on the other hand, is the absence of this Light....

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Gd is nevertheless still the indirect cause even of evil, since its actual cause is the absence of good, and it therefore results from the absence of Gd's Light and the concealment of His Presence....

...there are many levels among the qualities of these evil Forces and what results from them. In general their effects are called corruption (tumah), darkness, pollution (zohamah) mundane (chol) and the like.

Things resulting from the Illumination of Gd's presence, ...are called holiness, purity, light, blessing and the like.