

By the Grace of G-d
8th of Adar I, 5719
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr.
Department of Chemistry
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter and was sorry to read in it that you failed in your last exam. May G-d grant that you will make good in your next exam.

It is curious that immediately after the matter of the exam, you write about your religious troubles, and evidently you see no connection between the two, despite the fact that I have, in the past, ^{repeat} called your attention to the inter-relationship of all one's experiences with one's status in matters of Torah and Mitzvot. If you will reflect on your experiences regarding your progress in secular study in the past two years, you will surely convince yourself that the connection is a real one, and it surprises me that you do not notice it, even though you write about one immediately after the other.

Let me again emphasize that when I say that additional efforts in matters of Torah and Mitzvot will bring you additional Divine blessings in all your undertakings (including your exams), I mean by such "efforts," above all, the actual practice of the Mitzvot in every-day life, and next also the strengthening of your faith. The very fact that your religious troubles, i.e. your weakened faith, have immediately reflected themselves in a way for which there is no apparent "scientific" explanation - for what scientific connection can there be between faith in G-d and an examination in applied science - only goes to show that "scientific" explanation is not always a reliable method.

You write that although many apparent contradictions between religion and science have been explained to you in a way that they could be acceptable to you individually, you find it hard to accept them in total. You attribute this difficulty to your background, which taught you to think for yourself at every phase, having been brought up in public school and high school, instead of in a Yeshiva atmosphere. But it is not your being trained to think for yourself that is your difficulty, but rather your inability to think straight in this matter, because of the prejudice which you acquired - consciously and even more subconsciously - during those formative years, which you spent in an atmosphere which was alien to the point of view of the Torah, while the Torah viewpoint has come to you only recently. It is therefore not surprising that whenever any detail comes up which apparently is in conflict with your former attitude, you find it difficult to accept, in the belief that everything must strictly

I believe I pointed out to you during our discussion that the behavior of any individual is, in 90% or more of his actions, determined not by rational aförethought, but by habit and by faith in the authority of other people. Just consider your own actions, from the ~~next~~ moment of your awakening in the morning until you go to sleep at night, and ask yourself which of them you perform on the basis of scientific analysis or any kind of premeditation!

And here is another point to bear in mind. Precisely from the point of view of modern science - more than at any time in the past - it is clear that there can be no real conflict whatsoever between science and faith. Modern science upholds the view that there are no longer any immutable physical laws, that everything is relative, and that the so-called laws are no more than probabilities. Modern science no longer claims absolute certainty in the physical world. The fact that a certain thing behaves in a certain way today, is no conclusive evidence that the same thing behaved in the same way 5000 to 6000 years ago, or that it will behave the same way a thousand years hence unless all other things are equal, including all external physical conditions of atmosphere, outer space, temperature, pressure, etc., etc., not to mention human nature which is also changeable. And even, all things being equal, modern science will say that the past behavior of a certain thing in a certain way still offers us ~~absolute~~ ^{"chances"} certainty that it will behave that way, but only that "chances" are that it will.

Clearly, therefore, that modern science cannot presume to judge with any degree of certainty the truths which our religion proclaims. The most science could say is that these truths are more or less ~~likely~~. Ob-^v~~vious~~ly, there is no room here to speak of any conflict between science and faith, ~~xxxxsciencexxxselfxxxpkknatekxxbasedxxxfaitkxatthorxxkns~~

Finally, to refer to your statement that your attitude to Yiddishkeit is based on your faith in a certain person, let me say that in truth this is by no means the whole story. To illustrate: If a spark sets off a powder-keg, the resulting explosion in all its force cannot be attributed to the spark "exclusively," for the spark was no more than the immediate cause setting off the reaction. The energy released was already contained in the powder-keg. Similarly, every Jew already contains a Divine soul and all the potential energy, except that it is sometimes inactive, or that it is only active in a very limited way. When it comes in contact with a person, or with an event or experience which sets in motion a chain reaction releasing the potential energy already contained in the Divine soul, the reaction is indeed deep-rooted and by no means dependent on the external cause.

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I send you my prayerful wishes for growing faith in G-d, Whose Divine Providence extends to everyone individually, and that you strengthen your bonds with the Source of all life and all good, that is G-d, through the daily observance of the Torah and Mitzvoth, which will give you peace of mind, true happiness and success in all your undertakings.

With blessing,