

104199
RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.

HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
25th of Adar, 5721
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Chona Zvi Gorman
28, Lingwood Rd.
Clapton
London, E.5

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter, which is an acknowledgment of my letter. I was pleased to read in it about your Shiurim, and I hope that you make additional efforts from time to time in accordance with the precept of our Sages that all things of holiness should be on the upgrade.

With regard to the discussions and debates and questions about which you write, it is not the right way to engage in this kind of futile discussions which are endless and useless. There is only room for discussion among people who are studying together and a question comes up now and again, and even then they should be of minor consideration.

Generally speaking, all the questions which you mentioned have already been answered in our sacred books, and those who continue to argue about them do so mostly either because of ignorance or mischief. Some people simply fear that if they accepted the Torah and Mitzvoth fully, they would be obliged to commit themselves in their daily life and conduct, and give up certain pleasures, and the like. Therefore, they try to justify their misguided views by futile arguments.

By way of example, I will take one question which you mention in your letter, and which apparently was impressed upon you as something complicated, but in reality the matter was discussed and solved very simply in our sacred literature. I refer to the question of how can man have free choice of action if G-d already knows beforehand what he is going to do? The answer to this is simple enough, as can be seen on the basis of two illustrations:

1. Suppose there is a human being who can foretell the future of what is going to happen to a person. This does not mean that this knowledge deprives that person from acting freely as before. It only means that the knowledge of the forecaster is such that it is the knowledge of how the person will choose freely and of his own volition. Similarly, G-d's knowledge of human actions is such that does not deprive humans from their free choice of action, but it only means that G-d knows how the person will choose to act in a certain situation. To formulate this in scientific terms, we can

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say that the opposite to free choice is not pre-knowledge but compulsion, for there is such knowledge which does not entail compulsion (as for example, knowledge of the past).

2. Every believer in G-d, and not Jews only, believes that with G-d the past, present and future are all the same, since He is above time and space. Just as in the case of human affairs, the fact that Mr. X knows all that happened to Mr. Y in the past, this knowledge did not affect Mr. Y's actions in the past, so G-d's knowledge of the future, which is the same as His knowledge of the past, does not affect the free choice of human action.

From the simple solution to the above question, you can draw an analogy in regard to all similar questions and be sure that there is an answer to them, and very often a simple one. But the proper Jewish way is to fulfill the Torah and Mitzvoth without question, and then to try and find out anything that one wishes to find out about the Torah and Mitzvoth, but not, G-d forbid, make human understanding a condition of performance of G-d's commandments.

I trust that you participated in a Purim Farbrengen, and I hope that the inspiration and joy will be lasting throughout the year.

Hoping to hear good news from you,

With blessing,

By

Avraham Shmuel