

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.

B.H. 21st of Sivan, 5725
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr. Velvel Greene
Minneapolis, Minn.

Sholom uBrocho:

You have undoubtedly received my regards through Rabbi Moshe Feller, who had also brought me your regards. I trust you had an enjoyable and inspiring festival of Kabbolas haTorah, and that the inspiration will be with you throughout the year, to animate all your daily activities, inasmuch as the Torah totally encompasses the daily life of the Jew in all its aspects.

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter of May 9th, also your works on your scientific research. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and trouble in sending me the material. Although the subject matter is entirely beyond my province, I trust that I will be able to glean some general ideas from your writings, and perhaps also some specific ones.

At the risk of not sounding very "scientific" to you, I nevertheless wish to express my hope that you will apply also your research work to good advantage in the service of G-d, in accord with the principle, "Know Him in all thy ways." Indeed, the discoveries in the natural sciences have thrown new light on the wonders of Creation, and the modern trend has consequently been towards the recognition of the unity pervading Nature. In fact, with every advancement in science the underlying unity in the physical world has become more clearly discernable; so much so, that science is now searching for the ideal formula which would comprise all the phenomena of the physical world in one comprehensive equation. With a little further insight it can be seen that the unity in Nature is the reflection of true monotheism in its Jewish concept. For, as we Jews conceive of monotheism, it is not merely the belief that there is only One G-d, but that G-d's Unity transcends also the physical world, so that there is ^{only} one reality, namely G-d. However, inasmuch as Creation included all the souls, etc., there has been created a multiplicity and diversity in Nature - insofar as the created beings themselves are concerned, without, however, effecting any change in the Creator, as explained at length in Chassidus.

You ask me about my reference to the Rambam and where it contained in substance, though in different terms, the concepts of the conscience and subconsciousness of modern psychology. I had in mind a passage in Hilchos Gerushin, end of ch. 2, in the Rambam's Opus Magnum ("Yad Hachazakah"). The gist of that passage is as follows: There are certain matters in Jewish Law, the performance of which requires free volition, not coercion. However, where the Jewish Law requires specific performance, it is permitted

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to use coercive measures until the reluctant party declares "I am willing", and his performance is still valid and considered voluntary. There seems here an obvious contradiction: If it is permitted compel performance, why is it necessary that the person should declare himself "willing." And if compulsory performance is not valid, what good is it if the person declares himself "willing" under compulsion?

And here comes the essential point of the Rambam's explanation:

/in Every Jew, regardless of his status and station, is essentially willing to do all that he is commanded to do by our Torah. However, sometimes the Yetzer (Hara) prevails over his better judgment and prevents him from doing what he has to do/accordance with the Torah. When, therefore, Beth Din compels a Jew to do something, it is not with a view to creating in him a new desire, but rather to release him from the compulsion which had paralyzed his desire, thus enabling him to express his true self. Under these circumstances, when he declares "I am willing," it is an authentic declaration.

To put the above in contemporary terminology: The conscious state of a Jew can be affected by external pressures of inducing states of mind and even behavior which is contrary to his subconscious, which is the Jew's essential nature. When the external pressures are removed, it does not constitute a change or transformation of his essential nature, but, on the contrary, merely the reassertion of his innate and true character.

To a person of your background it is unnecessary to point out that nothing in the above can be construed as a confirmation of other aspects of the Freudian theory to the effect that man's psyche is primarily governed by libido, the sex drive, etc. For these ideas are contrary to those of the Torah, whose view is that the human being is essentially good (as in the Rambam, above). The only similarity is in the general idea that human nature is a composite of a substratum and various layers, especially insofar as the Jew is concerned, as above.

I will conclude with the traditional blessing which I have already conveyed to you through Rabbi Moshe Feller - to receive the Torah with joy and inwardness, as a daily experience throughout the year.

With blessing, *M. Schneerson*