

# Time and the Mind

*By HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok*

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The speed of time is not a constant. Time flows at different speeds depending upon one's point of reference. When Torah spoke of the world being created in six days, that period of time was measured by the Divine standard. We know today that by human standards, creation occurred billions of years ago. One does not contradict the other. Each speaks within the context of its own relativity. Mind you, we did not need modern science to tell us the age of the universe. Over 800 years ago the great Torah sage, Rabbi Yitzhak of Akko wrote about this in detail. The details of this are merely an academic curiosity. What is important is the actual psychological nature of the relative movement of time.

The speed of a thing is perceived relatively by those perceiving. For some a thing moves fast, for others a thing moves slowly. The conscious human mind is pretty much wired to focus on a specific thing for only a short amount of time. After a specific amount of time passes with no satisfactory external stimulation, the focus of the conscious mind passes on to something else from which it hopes to extract some form of stimulation. This is a basic statement of both psychology and neurology. The human brain likes to stay entertained; it hates to be bored.

Knowing this little piece of information makes it easier for those who wish to manipulate and direct human focus and attention. We all think that we perceive things the same; this is definitely not true. One of the ways to gain power of the cause of an adversary is simply to wait to fight them. Causes, be they political, social or personal all share one thing in common; they are all charged by emotion. Yet, to maintain an emotional charge for something one must keep it in focus. Yet, when the passion of the moment or of the time passes, interest in that specific cause also wanes and passes. All the opposition then has to do is a simple mop up operation to remove whatever small and insignificant remainder of the adversary remains. Simply be being patient and allowing the other side to run out of steam is often how the weak chose to confront and defeat the mighty.

For those who have patience, time is not moving too slow. They can wait years or even decades for the emotional fervor of their opposition to wane and eventually die. In most cases, waits are never that long. Usually emotional commitments to most causes are short lived. While those so committed will continue to proclaim their beliefs in a thing, still after a short time their belief system is even subject to persuasion. Once the emotional charge has burned itself out of a cause then all remaining intellectual attachment to that cause have no legs to stand on and quickly becomes subject to rationalization and change. In the end, those with knowledge and patience wait out their opposition to succumb to the most fundamental of human frailties, the psychological need to continuing stimulation. Deny the opposition conflict to further arouse their emotions and you strip from them the power to continue the fight.

Throughout history this maneuver has been used by numerous warlords and generals on the battlefield with great success. What most of us fail to realize is that this same ancient military technique has been adopted by political organizations today and is even used by many of the world's police departments and armies when having to types of face civil unrest too large to just destroy using violent force. All they have to do is contain the problem, first by limiting its exposure in the media; this is done so as to not allow any further emotional eruptions. The more people who see the beaten and oppressed minority the more people tend to take their side in sympathy.

Second the opposition is publicly condemned as being extremist. People hate that word! Nothing can destroy the legitimacy of any position more than defining it as extreme. Remember this, the term extreme, liberal, conservation or whatever are all terms subject to one's personal point of view. We all use words and throw them around without too much consideration. We therefore end up calling something by a name and a definition which may have absolutely nothing to do with the reality of the thing. Nonetheless, labels are like glue, one attached they stick hard. Few make any real effort to look beneath a label.

Again, human psychology is in play here. The brain likes what is easy and provides for it quick stimulation. If the brain has to work hard to receive its stimulation it would rather pass on to something easier and quicker. The powers that be know this human weakness and exploit it regularly. Once attention has waned from the cause and after most people have been persuaded into believing that the cause was an extremist position anyway, then the powers that be, be they military or police can sweep in and mop up without too much public outcry, care or sympathy for the now broken cause.

One who understands the psychological workings of the human mind knows well how to influence others and to bring them around to one's side. This is "psych-ops" at its best. This is no longer the domain of secret military projects. These same techniques are used daily by governments, business organizations, social groups, and every other kind of conflict where we have one group pitted against another on ideological grounds. The great rule of any warfare is to defeat the mind of the opponent and however big and strong his body, it will topple with the greatest of ease.

People who cling to causes based solely on emotion will always suffer defeat after defeat because of the emotional nature of their commitment. However strong their ideology, emotional based expressions burn out quickly and the opponents to such ideologies simply wait them out to burn out and then move in to take over.

A quick fix for this type of psychological aberration is not forthcoming. The only way to combat this enemy is to recognize that the true enemy is the one within ourselves. The political, social or whatever opposition is simply using a "wait them out" approach. They know that those seeking instant stimulation and gratification will move on sooner or later. All they have to do is wait. For them, time is definitely relative. What for us might seem to be the passage of weeks, months or years, for those with patience, whatever the passage of time, it is just a mere few minutes. This is because their commitment to their cause is not based upon passing emotions of the moment, but rather is deep down, focused and anchored upon ruthless determination to get their job done. Those swayed by emotion lack the necessary depth to equal the focus, commitment and determination of their opposition.

The enemy within therefore is our own psychological lack of focus, commitment, determination and practical wisdom to recognize the wiles of the opposition. As long as surface emotions rule and one is easily swayed away from that which is hard or uncomfortable, the forces of the opposition will always win, time and time again. All the opposition has to do is make something harder, less comfortable and especially convincing you of the extremism of your way. Once doubt is sewn into your mind, you will topple, no matter how strong you may appear.

One must learn to refocus one's power in the mind. One must learn to embrace that which is uncomfortable and actually enjoy hardships. One must look for the rejection of others and wear that as a badge of pride. One must embrace suffering and actually seek it out. One must want to become a martyr for the cause. This must be one's emotional focus. These types of deeply laden passion are not easily if at all rooted out by any opposition. Yet, aside from all these, one must also take a position of great patience and allow the passage of time. One must not be worn down by one's opposition. Instead must be tenacious enough to allow the passage of time to work towards the breakdown of the other side.

This is how the mighty are toppled. You see this all around you. It is happening now in arenas best left unidentified. It is happening now to you. Only your realignment of priorities and your renewed willingness to sacrifice will get you through. If you are unwilling to change, then change will happen all around you and will eventually sweep you up along with it. You may not see it coming or even recognize it happening. But in the end you will not be the same person you are today. If this is important to you, you might want to pay attention. If not, then so be it. We each will have to face our individual destinies. And G-d is watching, and He will act, from His relative position in Divine Time.

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