

B”H

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Cyclical Time and the Question of Determinism

*By Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok
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**“Rabbi Akiva says...
Everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given;
the world is judged with good and everything follows
according to the majority of actions.”**

Pirkei Avot 3:18

These words of Rabbi Akiva address one of the most important topics discussed in every spiritual tradition – is an individual free to do as he/she chooses or is there a predetermined fate that all must eventually succumb to?

The answer to this is that both are true. Each individual has the potential to do almost whatever it is that one wishes to do. At the same time, each of us has severe limitations placed upon us by either our selves, our societies, or by nature.

We can rightly ask, just how much personal freedom does the individual have? In order to understand how the freedom of choice is given, we must first understand how everything is foreseen. To understand this we must discuss certain realities about the spiritual realms.

Spiritual beings, be they angels or souls are not physical entities. They exist in non-corporeal forms. This means that they are without mass or matter. Human bodies and all other physical matter is made up of atoms and subatomic particles all moving and vibrating at a speed slower than that of light.

Yet, at the point of light speed, something amazing happens. Physical matter loses its mass and instead of being physical, it becomes pure energy. Beyond this boundary, modern science is only beginning to explore.

One idea that has been discussed over the past century is the possibility of the existence of faster-than-light particles known as tachyons. Just what these particles are, no one can say for sure because no one can ever see one in a slower-than-light universe. Einstein’s theory of relativity has discovered an

impassable wall here. That which is slower than light can never become faster. The opposite is also true, that which is faster than light can never become slower.

This is where modern science stands today. However, on the “other” side of light, the world made up of tachyons, there must exist laws of physics very different from ours. Who is to say that these hyper-light particles do not form their our type of life that manifest as conscious living beings? Scientifically, there is no known proof of such things. However, religiously such entities and such dimensions have been known about for millennia. We know the hyper-light entities as angels and they vary in species as do we sub-light humans.

Modern physics has noted an interesting point about hyper-light particles, they move backwards in time. Sub-light particles move forward in time. Indeed, today there is serious scientific investigation to see if a real life time-machine could ever be developed. The fact that sub-light and hyper-light particles (and thus the beings that they form) move in opposite directions in time, enables us to draw some very strange and highly profound conclusions about creation.

Everyone knows that the Bible states that in the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth. In traditional mystical Torah literature, the heavens are always a reference to the spiritual domains; thus, they are hyper-light dimensions.

The earth is a reference to all physical matter, thus our sub-light universe. We know that our earth was created at the beginning of time, yet in light of what we have just learned the heavens must have been created at the end of time, which was their beginning.

The reason for this is clear. In our physical world, time marches forward. In the hyper-light worlds, mystically called the heavens, time marches backwards. Thus at creation, the earth began at the beginning, whereas the heavens began at the end.

Each is marching towards some yet unknown middle. Each will most likely pass the other and eventually end up where the other began. This apparently is the meaning of the teaching in the Sefer Yetzirah where it states that the beginning of a thing is in its end and its end is in its beginning.

If all this is true then the prophecies about the future of mankind and the good of the world to come all make sense. Mankind is heading towards heaven and the heavens are heading towards the earth. When the two meet, there will be heaven on earth and mankind in heaven. All this is ingrained in the fabric and nature of creation.

Now, with regards to what Rabbi Akiba said about everything being foreseen, this too is completely clear in light of the above. How do the angels and the other spiritual entities know everything that is yet to happen? Because for them, our future is their past. They have already seen what we have yet to experience.

We must admit that the grace of G-d is one of the greatest mysteries in the universe. For although G-d knows all that is to happen, both on earth and in heaven, we are still told that we have free will to change, influence or to completely alter that which, in heaven's eyes, has already happened. This leads us to another wholly profound conclusion. Even if something has already happened in heaven's past, here on the earth plane it can still be changed.

How is it possible for something that has already happened to be changed, before it has ever happened in the first place? The paradoxes in thinking about these things are enough to boggle the mind of even the smartest and wisest human being. Nonetheless, all this transpires as an act of G-d's grace.

That which, in heaven's eyes, already was, does not have to manifest for us as what will be. Yet, heaven's reality simply cannot disappear. In actuality, what does happen reveals to us another wonder about the universe.

As Einstein has shown, and the Torah mystics have always known, whenever there is a matter of choice in our physical universe, and more than one possibility exists, rather than just one event occurring, all possible events occur. Each possibility occurs and causes a shift in space-time, branching off into its own special and unique dimension.

This is what the master Kabbalist the Ari'zal taught when he said that G-d created an infinite number of worlds. Einstein called them parallel universes and indeed, there are an infinite number of them, each with a planet earth and each with a you and me on it.

The decisions that we have made in this universe are very different from the decisions that we have made in the others. These other aspects of ourselves existing simultaneously in parallel universes are what the Torah mystics have called "sparks" of our souls.

The only place of integration of all the sparks is in heaven. For while on earth, our soul has the greatest gift that G-d has ever given to us – and that is teshuva, the ability to repent and to change. Even to this simple concept, there is a profound secret.

When one changes a course of direction in life, the consequences of one's past sins will never catch up with their owner. The reason is not merely that G-d has forgiven the sinner, but rather because of the change in his behavior, one has shifted his universe into a parallel plane. The sins of the past and their future

consequences lie in the previous universe and cannot follow the soul of the penitent into his new domain. Therefore, a Ba'al Teshuva (repenter) is said to be born anew. This is much more than a mere metaphor, this is a profound scientific fact.

The great rule in creation is that what happens here on earth has a very powerful affect upon what happens in heaven. Apparently, the opposite is not as true. The Torah mystics have an explanation as to why this is so. They refer to the ten sefirot, the levels of Divine manifestation in creation. They point to the fact that the physical universe corresponds to the lowest of the ten, Malkhut. The Divine radiance flows downwards from the upper worlds into the lowest one. Therefore, our physical world receives the radiance from all the upper realms, including that realm which we call Heaven.

These upper worlds give to us, we receive from them. Now, of course there is a reciprocal giving on our parts to the upper worlds, but what we give to them is different from what they give to us. The higher dimensions provide for our physical dimension the energy of coherence that binds atomic structures. We call this energy the "life force." This is how the Divine light manifests below. Without such an influx of coherence, all physical matter would simply fall apart into an ocean of unconnected atoms.

We, in turn, must reciprocate and elevate above that which is appropriate for those dimensions. The only hyper-light, non-physical entity that we know exists here in the sub-light physical universe is the human mind. The human mind, not the brain, is what gives us our identity, our sense of self.

Our minds in essence are our souls. These entities come into this physical universe, inhabit a body for a while and then return from whence they came. During their time here on earth, souls have an obligation to elevate the Divine light that has descended here and unfortunately become stuck. This is performed by our observance of Torah and mitzvot, the Jew and Benei Noah each doing that which they are required to do.

Thought, the power of the mind has actually be proven scientifically (in tests conducted in France during the 1980's) to travel faster than the speed of light. Mind, i.e., soul therefore responds to mitzvah observance and these provide a reciprocal return of light to the upper spiritual hyper-light dimensions. When this occurs, the process is called "good." When there is a breach in this process, the results are called "bad."

It is important that we understand the concepts of good and bad in relationship to science and not just morality. There actually is a universal standard for good and bad. The universal standard is based upon the upkeep of our multi-dimensional universe. That which maintains the balance is good, that which disturbs it is bad.

This now causes a problem for us humans, how can we possibly know anything about maintaining balance in multiple dimensions? We have never traveled into outer space, much less into parallel space, how then can we be expected to understand what to do?

The answer to these questions is rather easy. Our souls that have originated from the hyper-light universe and come down here know intuitively what is right and wrong, because they have been on the “other side.”

Now that they are here in the physical world, they see both sides of the big picture. Unfortunately, sometimes life in the physical world tends to blur one’s spiritual vision. This again leads to a break down of the universal system. G-d in His good grace thus gave to Israel the Torah.

Torah reminds us what it is we need to do and awakens our souls to our forgotten heritage and destiny. For although we look to the rewards of the world to come as being something in the future, for our souls, coming as they do from the hyper-light universe, all those rewards are in their past. Souls already know the good of the world to come, they live it eternally.

Therefore, our universe is “judged” as Rabbi Akiva terms it with goodness. Moreover, why does Rabbi Akiva use the word “judge” to describe the operations of the universe? The answer is because our physical world is a most limited and claustrophobic dimension.

Divine light must squeeze itself into here and becomes highly concentrate in doing so. So much energy is squeezed into so little physical space. This is the underlying foundation of nuclear physics and the breaking of the atom. If an atom is smashed then its concentrate energy is released. The result is an atomic explosion.

We have seen what one atomic bomb can do. That is the splitting of one atom. Judging from the trillions and trillions of atoms in just one physical object, think how much energy is really squeezed into the entire physical universe?

Squeezing and its opposite expansion are two aspects of the Sefirotic Tree of Life. The Divine emanations on the “right side” of the Tree are called the expansive elements. These are called “mercy.” The “left side” of the Tree represents the constrictive elements. These are called “severity” or “judgement.” Therefore, being that our physical universe is so squeezed together, it is called the universe of severity or judgement.

This explains why the laws of nature are so severe and why physically oriented human nature has had so many problems adjusting to that which is different from its own. Human nature is too squeezed and restricted to accept the differences

of others. Until we learn to integrate the good, and the expansive, the human experience will continue to be one of severity, judgement, pain, and suffering.

Rabbi Akiva concludes and tells us that everything follows the “majority of action.” For although our physical world by definition is the squeezed world of severity and judgment, our hyper-light souls bring into the physical world the aspect of expansive Divine mercy through the observance of Torah and mitzvot.

We thus have a Divine dance on our hands. Physical nature dictates one thing and spiritual nature dictates another. When the two are balanced, everything is in perfect harmony. When they are knocked out of balance, then nature takes its course. Everything is decided by the nature of the balance and which way the universal “scales” are leaning.

If good and bad are universal constants, I wonder if anger is also. I pray not, because if the hyper-light beings have to intervene here on earth because of our lack of efforts, I fear that their anger may be great.

Rabbi Akiva came to advise us about the true nature of the physical and energy universes and what we must do to maintain the balance between them.

His words of wisdom are worthy of our contemplation.

We had better act upon them if we wish to maintain the scientific integrity of our universe, even more so lead happy and fruitful human lives.