

Freedom To Choose

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Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught...

<p><i>Reb Nosson wrote: "You must know and believe that, no matter what, a person always has free choice. As for what is beyond his control, it is not his affair."</i></p>

<p><i>(Healing Leaves, p. 41)</i></p>

What does this mean to me?

Reb Nosson here helps to clarify a concept that confuses many of us. Why, if the purpose of our existence is for us to exercise our free will to reveal G-d's presence in the world, do we often feel so boxed in by circumstances? What, exactly, is the nature of this free will when we see how limited we are sometimes in what we can accomplish or change?

Clearly, our free will is not a force that guarantees our getting our way; only G-d can completely carry out His will into the world of action without obstacles. As Reb Nosson says, there are things that are beyond our control, but they are not our affair. Our work lies within the circumscribed area of our choices and action; there, we are free to choose.

Our ability to exercise free will continues throughout our lives. If our actions are limited, we still choose what to think. If our thoughts are limited, we still choose what to want.

A prayer:

*Merciful G-d,
I know how very much
You care for me;
You've made me
"in accordance with Your Will."
Why then don't I always want to be
that which You've made me?
Help me not to fall short
of all that You want me to be.
(Gentle Weapon*, p. 92)*

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