

Brain Damage

By

Rabbi Edward L. Nydle/ B'nai Avraham



²Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of Elohim, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]. **Romans 12:2**

We are admonished by Scripture to “renew our minds”. Why does Scripture emphasize the necessity for renewal and what are some of stumbling blocks we place in the way to that process?

- “We must read the Bible or we shall not understand psychology. Our psychology, whole lives, our language, and imagery are built upon the bible.” - **C.G. Jung-The Visions Seminar, Vol.1,p.156**
- “The statements made in the Holy Scriptures are also utterances of the soul...they point to realities that transcend consciousness. These entia are the archetypes of the collective unconscious.” – **C.G. Jung, “Answer to Job.”**

The average person only uses around five percent of their brain. The human brain is not the mind. The mind (*mochin*) is not the brain. The brain is the physical organ that houses the mind and soul of man. Within the brain we perceive the consciousness of the mind and touch the consciousness that pervades the whole universe (the unconscious).¹ Every thought, imagination, and feeling that we have serves as filters that interpret our interactions in this physical world. The brain is a victim of habit. It always wants to fill in the dots, even when the dots are not all there. The brain is influenced by various stimulations coming from the outside world. Every sound, image, light, taste, or feeling from the outside influences the brain. The brain says to reality;”Do not confuse me with the facts. I have my own preconceived notions.” Thoughts, no matter how distorted or wrong they may be, triumph over the true reality in the physical world. What is red to my eyes may appear maroon to yours.

¹ The physical brain is only the circuitry that makes the mind perceptible. In that case, destroy the mind and a form of consciousness will still remain. Smash a radio and there is no more music to be heard. But the radio waves are still out there. We just do not have the apparatus to change the electromagnetic radiation into mechanical sound waves. The brain does for the mind what the radio does for music.

The difference of opinion is not merely one of definition. The difference is how each individual perceives reality according to their experience and subjective view. Nature and nurture seek conspire together to provide the conscious mind with a finished product, a distorted inside view of the outside world. Illusions are very powerful.² The conscious mind can trick the mind in its perception of reality, but the unconscious is always aware that the conscious mind is up to tricks.

- “Are you going to believe me or your lying eyes?”- **Groucho Marx-Duck Soup**

The world we behold with our senses accords at best only a crude picture of the reality and splendors of Creation that surrounds us. Material devices, no matter how sophisticated, cannot begin to measure the transcendent. New technology has not brought us closer to unraveling the secrets of Creation, the enigma of time, space, energy, and the workings of the cosmos. The scientific quest still stresses intellectual knowledge and has methodological limits. Quantum physics is just now beginning to unravel the mysteries that can be found within the ancient writings of the Jewish Kabbalists.³ Nearly two thousand years ago **The Book of Splendor** said:

- “There is a certain point which is the beginning of number and which cannot be further analyzed.”

The human mind can be our best friend or our greatest enemy. The human brain cannot turn itself off; it is always receiving some sort of stimuli from the outside. The mind is constantly bombarded with all types of information every second of every day. We suffer from mental overload that causes it very difficult to sift through the information and discern the truth concerning any matter. Most people subscribe to the old saying that: “Ignorance is bliss.” A closed mind will never recognize truth nor will it ever find truth. It will prefer to be told by someone in “authority” what the truth is as that person or system dominates the individual’s mind.

- **Mat t.21:23** *And when He had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching, and said, By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?*
- **Matt. 7:28-29** *And it happened, when Yahshua had finished these words, the crowds were astonished at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as having authority, and not as the scribes.*

If the mind is not renewed then we will be molded or fashioned into the image of this world. Spiritual mind control begins with the knowledge of the human psyche. This requires great discipline. One has to learn both the laws of the inner and outer reality. We must learn how to control our desires and learn the true nature of those desires in oneself and others. These are the foundation of all Scripture, science, and the mind. It will also

² Optical illusions can deceive our mind into thinking that what we think we see is real.

³ Kabbalah teaches us that 99% of reality is beyond the physical senses. This means that we are 99% metaphysical beings of thought, feeling, and consciousness.

require us to strip away all the religious hype from the modern soothsayers, preachers, television evangelists, and philosophers.

Perceptions of reality can either be subjective or objective. Objective reality is the perception which is experienced by all and interpreted collectively as having a specific meaning. This is what most of us would call “real”. Subjective reality is the perception of a thing that is interpreted in an individualized manner unique to the psyche of each individual at the moment. Both perceptions are important for society as a whole and for the individual. Over emphasis on either creates a system that is imbalanced. Over emphasis on the objective view creates a society or religion that dominates and controls and does not allow for individual thought and results in no sense of individual worth. This is the greatest of evils. We are all commanded to seek a healthy sense of subjective reality.

All our personal perceptions and interpretations are subjective. We can only know reality as we perceive it not the true reality (the big picture in the light of eternity) of our experiences. We are the creators of our inner map for our subjective reality. Our awareness of reality changes as our perception changes due to maturity, environment, culture, religion, and growth. However, it is hard for us to conceive of a world that is beyond our senses or even what it would be like for beings with a different set of senses than our own. We assume our senses are accurate and accept as true the picture of reality that we perceive through them.⁴ If this is true, then how can we know what is real? How can we ever know reality if our perception of it is always subjective?

- **1Cor. 13:12** *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall fully know even as I also am fully known.*

The perception of objective reality can only come from Above and ultimately no one can prove or disprove anything about absolute reality. We see through a glass darkly in this physical world, while His perception is crystal clear. Since all our experiences, thoughts, and feelings are seen through our own “colored glasses”, our conclusions on all matters can only be illusionary at best. If we do not perceive the Creator or the Creator’s domain over us at this present moment, then we are truly in darkness. This darkness is for the sole purpose of compelling us to develop a need for Elohim’s help and in order to draw us closer to the Creator. All must acknowledge that Elohim does exist inside the human mind detached from any outside reality.

According to the ancient Jewish sages this image of the world is ultimately an illusion, borne from our limited perceptions. The more one is limited and lower one’s spiritual attainment, the more divided one feels from the rest of existence, and even from his inner Source. As we achieve a higher state of awareness, we will increasingly see the Unity in the seemingly random events that are going on around us and the world. C.G. Jung called this “an awareness of meaningful coincidences” or synchronicity. We become aware of the Divine

⁴ Modern physics tells us that a physical object does not exist until observation brings it into being.

harmony that exists within the cosmos and that such “coincidences” point to the truth that everything is ultimately interrelated.

We live in a prison for the mind and seek to be free from the illusion of freedom. We proclaim our freedom but are blind to the truth that we are really enslaved. True spirituality is the pursuit of release and liberation from our self-imposed slavery to Egypt. It was not enough to remove Yisrael out of Egypt. Elohim had to take Egypt out of Yisrael. Remember at first Egypt gave the Yisraelites the illusion of being a caring nurturing protective “mother” and a safe “comfort zone” in which to live , but later she becomes bondage and a tyranny from which to escape.

- *“The real exile of Yisrael in Egypt was that they learned to endure it.”-Rabbi Hanoah of Alexander*

Anything that restricts our awareness of the true nature of our being is a state of being enslaved in Egypt. Anytime we allow a narrow part of the self, rather than the whole of our being, to become our focus, we enter into a state of slavery to Egypt. Our biggest slave driver is all our yesterdays. When we allow the past to define and limit us, we become slaves to that image or idol that we have created in our minds.

The Exodus from Egypt can be interpreted as a metaphor about the transformation of the human consciousness and healing journey of the soul/mind from the narrow confines of the Ego to the Promised Land of the *ruach* or liberation. The Hebrew word “*Mitzrayim* (Egypt)” suggests “*meitzarim*”, narrow straits or a confined space. It is a symbol of the confined consciousness and suffering we experience when we lose touch with our true nature and become confined to the narrow states of consciousness or enslaved to inflexible roles, behaviors, or mind-sets. We can be free from the limiting aspects of our upbringing and environment. Our childhood is the beginning of our exile, as it is when we learn to repress the expression of our full being in order to meet the approval of parents, family, school, religion, and peers. In our personal exile we become disconnected from our true self and inner being; our outer lives become out of sync with our inner essence. Deliverance from this exile implies a return to one’s true self. When we come home to ourselves we find our inner essence is expressed in our outer life and actions. We have to leave behind the false self we assumed as children by freeing ourselves from the chains of seeking the approval from others and get in touch with our true inner being. Slavery to our limited identity as the past will cause us to lose touch with the mystery of “becoming” and we cannot grow due to the fact that we no longer dream or imagine any other state than that of a slave.

- **Rom. 6:16** *Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves as slaves for obedience, you are slaves to him whom you obey; whether it is of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness.*

Adam's mind was originally whole. The conscious and the unconscious minds (internal soul) were unified as one. The revealed and the concealed were perceived as a unity or whole. The entire universe was connected to the Creator, unlimited by space and time and unfettered by entropy and death. Body consciousness was completely dominated by soul consciousness.

Mankind's slavery to the subjective reality began with the fall of man in the *Gan Eden*. By eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam's mind became divided. Man's vision of creation became blurred and distorted, thus "sin" entered into Adam⁵. Body consciousness asserted itself, dragging down not only Adam (mankind) but the entire world. Reality became clothed in husks or shells called by the ancient kabbalists "*klippot*". Somehow the unified mind of Adam (mankind) became divided and the awareness of the various spiritual worlds and the physical world became split.

The unconscious mind is like the part of the iceberg that is hidden under the water. It is vastly larger than the tip that can be seen by the senses or conscious (or known) mind. That which exists outside of us, does not exist according to our personal set of rules.

The Gan Eden was a place where the spiritual worlds and the "physical" were one. There was no veil separating them. It represents the original state of the Self. It is the unconscious Union of opposites. The "body" and soul were unified in a unity that mankind will only experience again in the resurrection. In the resurrected state, mankind will once again be as Adam was in the Beginning. Body and soul will be united as a single unit and experience reality objectively. One will be released from the conflict of opposites.

Until then, we exist in two worlds at once, but we are unaware of or cannot perceive the other. We are physical beings that very rarely are even aware of the spiritual. Our unconscious self dwells in the spiritual world, yet we seem to be cut off from the spiritual. If we can access the unconscious mind, then we can access the spiritual worlds in which it dwells. The unconscious knows and perceives the objective reality since it is not dependent upon the senses or the conscious mind in order to see clearly the true reality. The unconscious mind is constantly trying to communicate the truth to our conscious mind, but we fail to properly interpret its messages because the conscious mind is filtering it through our prejudices, preconceptions, experiences, teachings, and feelings. Therefore the conscious mind is unable to perceive external reality objectively. These influences have been with us since birth. This is the result of eating of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

⁵ Adam is a code word for humanity as a whole.

The human mind is divided into three separate aspects. These are *Keter* (Crown), *Hokmah* (Wisdom), and *Binah* (Understanding). Or, we can explain it as thus; United Brain/Higher Self, Left Brain, and Right Brain. *Binah* is what we call rational, intellectual, and academic knowledge. *Hokmah* is abstract thinking in symbols, images, and spiritual insight. *Binah* consciousness is our human subjective point of view. It is usually expressed through the written or spoken word. It is how we view the world. Beyond consciousness lies a hidden world known as the unconscious.

Hokmah consciousness does not deal with the external world around us. Rather, it deals with our inner personal world and relationship to it and ourselves. *Hokmah* (Wisdom) resides in the unconscious. Any knowledge of Wisdom is not academic and subject to analytical thinking of the intellect. *Hokmah* is expressed through images, pictures, and symbols. We could call it the “dream language”. *Hokmah* deals with the realm of the mind that reflects upon itself and the aspect of life and reality unseen by the human eyes. It is the part of the human mind that perceives the spiritual realms. The unconscious lies beneath the conscious mind and supports or maintains it. Yet, the conscious mind cannot delve into the unconscious at will and receive knowledge from within in the same manner as knowledge is acquired from without. *Hokmah* must reveal itself to the conscious mind according to its own set of rules and methods. Any attempt to acquire wisdom through the normal means that one acquires *Binah* knowledge is futile and lies outside the ability of the conscious mind. *Hokmah* gives of itself and *Binah* receives from it, or there is no communication between the two aspects of the mind. We could say that *Hokmah* thought is pre-conscious thinking or existed before any outside communication with external sources. It is intuitive thinking that has to be felt rather analyzed by the intellect. The information received comes from within rather than from without. It is not logical, provable, or even subject to scrutiny. It is “heart knowledge” that is truer than any other information coming from outside.

All spiritual power flows out of the unconscious mind into a conscious reality. Since the unconscious mind has access to the greater reality, it has greater insight into the objective reality that is veiled by our subjective perceptions. The unconscious tries to communicate objective reality through archetypal images or symbols that we can experience while in a dream state, trance, or vision. A symbol is a message in concentrated form. Some images have universal meaning and others require proper knowledge in order to interpret them correctly. This communication is constant, even if the conscious mind does not understand the message it is receiving. Sometimes the emerging images from the unconscious may often manifest themselves first in the individual’s lived reality. He or she may find themselves by an inner urge or inclination to live out a situation that has its root in the symbolic image that he needs to properly understand. Sometimes we have to look at the way you are living life, what you are doing, and what your inclinations lead you to actually perform.⁶

⁶ See Jeremiah chapter 13:1-11 where the prophet buries soiled loincloths.

- “Every man’s condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put. He acts it as life, before he apprehend it as truth.”-**Ralph Waldo Emerson-Nature ,p.3**

The problem is the conscious mind is filtering the messages through the layers of misconceptions of the intellect and senses. Thus, the communication from the unconscious is integrated into a message or reality that the unconscious never intended .These misconceptions and interpretations make up the husks that surround truth.

The conscious mind becomes clouded by ideas, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions which it does not always understand. This gives birth to prejudices, preconceptions, fear, and emotional imbalances. These then give motivation to our behavior. Our irrational emotions and feelings give motivation to our sometimes bizarre behavior as humans. Man always tries to rationalize his behaviors with excuses of one kind or another in order to justify his words, thoughts, and actions. These excuses then give birth to doctrines, philosophies, dogmas, ideas, and propaganda that will provide their adherents with the excuse for their immoral or un-Scriptural behavior. By acting upon these mind-sets, these individuals reinforce their subjective perceptions of the world, religion, economics, and politics. No rational arguments can persuade them otherwise. Their reality is placed within their little box of subjective perceptions and they can never be persuaded that is an illusion created by their conscious mind.

The majority of humanity remains controlled by the physical world. They may only once or twice in their lifetime make direct contact with the upper worlds of the unconscious. Most people choose to devalue such moments of inspiration or vision. *Hokmah* knowledge seems irrational (being defined exclusively in the negative) and thus is dismissed or ignored by those who only rely upon the intellect. Like Esau of old they would rather sell their birthright for a mess of pottage in order to experience immediate satisfaction in the physical world. Reality becomes nothing more than confusion for them and their lives seem to be always in chaos. They become cut off from humanity as a whole and have lost the ways and means to properly communicate with fellow human beings at the collective level. This gives birth to mistrust, fear, and conflict. In a way, these people cease from being fully human.

Conflict erupts when two or more subjective groups find that their reality does not coincide with the other. Instead of allowing each person or group to think freely, each group thinks it alone is right and that the other groups’ viewpoint is wrong. Since any other viewpoint challenges their shells or *klippot* they have created, they react in fear because the alternate view suggests that they may be wrong in their subjective conclusions. These doubts cannot be tolerated by their conscious mind and unleashes tremendous, almost fanatical zeal that inspires them to destroy any belief or group that challenges their reality. Like Pharaoh of Egypt they resist any change of the status quo and seek to act as a counterforce to any attempt at self-liberation. This type of group or individual

will insist on clinging to situations, habits, relationships, and patterns that have outlived their usefulness, and as a result, society and individuals suffer. No matter how foolish or ridiculous their position may be, any attempt to change their minds concerning what they believe will be met with hostility born out of fear that they might be wrong. Every fear and anxiety that we experience can be traced to have its root in the self. Body consciousness seems to enjoy an undisputed championship over the soul consciousness. It seeks power, domination, and control of all the destructive behavior of man.

If we would pay attention to the inner intuitive voice of Wisdom, we would all internally know truth, and that inner truth would enable us as a collective human race to know our rightful places, purposes, and direction in life. It does not mean that we all would be the same, but we would be able to recognize the value of every individual. Mankind is lost; rather lost to ourselves. When we find the self, then we will find the collective and reenter our proper place in the universe and participate in its *tikkun* (restoration).

We have to remember that all our insights are subjective and clouded due to the husks that cover our conscious mind. We can only receive small portions of truth, which are not complete enough to form objective views of reality. When the conscious mind chooses to discard the information from the unconscious mind, the unconscious then turns to the communication form of dreams and attempts to speak to the conscious mind. Sometimes this can cause great distress within an individual and they may react with all kinds of irrational fears that can lead to numerous mental or emotional imbalances.

The *Keter* mind is the Source/Higher Self that is the essence of what defines us as an individual. It is what directs our lives and defines our individual destinies. The *Keter* mind uses both forms of thinking: right brain and left brain. This part of the human soul is sometimes called the *Neshamah*. It is invisible and we can only perceive of it when it wishes to make known of itself as it reveals aspects of its nature through *Binah* and *Hokmah*, our intuitive and rational perceptions. It is the “something” inside that molds and guides our individual lives with the intent to bring us to a pre-conceived place or conclusion. It is the “inner guide”, *mazal*, or guardian angel that directs us no matter how much we fight its influence or reject the concept.

The Higher Self exists in a universe parallel to our lower selves in our lower universe. Our Higher Self will never cease from making whatever is necessary to bring one back to the path which is best for the individual. Changes are brought to often awaken us so we can achieve the goals of our individual destiny. Change is the key and movement is the way. A sleeper does not move and does not change. The step is to awaken from our slumbering.

Above all is the Absolute Mind or Primal Cause of all, the Ultimate Consciousness in Manifest Action. The Ultimate is what the Ultimate is. IT is not a He. It is beyond words and is Nothing (*Ayn*).

The world system and ways seek to dominate and control the unconscious mind. It is like the “strange woman” we find in **Proverbs** that seeks to seduce the young innocent man. Like Yosef (Joseph) in the Bible, we can choose to flee from the alluring Potiphar’s wife by having a special relationship with the unconscious, or succumb to the seduction which may lead to a separation from the Higher Self.

- **Prov. 2:10 -19** *For wisdom shall enter into thy heart, and knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall watch over thee, discernment shall guard thee; To deliver thee from the way of evil, from the men that speak froward things; Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of evil; Who are crooked in their ways, and perverse in their paths; To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the alien woman that maketh smooth her words; That forsaketh the master of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her Elohim. For her house sinketh down unto death, and her paths unto the shades; None that go unto her return, neither do they attain unto the paths of life;*
- **Prov. 5:1 -6** *My son, attend unto my wisdom (Hokmah); incline thine ear to my understanding (Binah); That thou mayest preserve discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge (Da’at). For the lips of a strange woman drop honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil; But her end is bitter as wormwood(bitter), sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on the nether-world; Lest she should walk the even path of life, her ways wander, but she knoweth it not.*

The conscious mind if left disconnected from the unconscious, causes the unconscious self to be lost and without direction and purpose. Without the insight of the unconscious, the conscious mind will always misinterpret, misunderstand, and confuse reality. If this occurs, then the conscious mind will continue to distance itself from the spiritual reality and without objective reality the conscious mind is left with its illusionary subjectivity.

The ego must be willing to sacrifice itself in order to commit itself to the urgings of the activated unconscious. A change of mind or the act *teshuvah* (a return) must precede this willingness to obey the Absolute Will. One must be willing to descend into the unconscious and be reconciled to it. The unconscious always seeks to compromise with the ego, but the ego must make some gesture of sacrifice or reconciliation towards the unconscious. It is willing to compromise once the ego gives up its hostile attitude .Sometimes this requires a crisis in the person’s life in order for them to stop trusting in the external illusion of reality. Once the ego experiences a sense of despair, it opens the door for the unconscious to flood in with a glimpse of the true reality. Once this happens then the individual is ready for a recovery of the connection with the Higher Self on a new and different level.

Ancient spiritual leaders were able to produce spiritual systems that successfully addressed the psychological needs of mankind. These systems were the psychoanalysis of the past. These systems, when properly observed, enabled the people to live mentally balanced lives. It is within this context that the Torah was given to Yisrael. The proper practice of the mitzvot gives the individual and society a means of expression for the unconscious contents to manifest into the conscious reality in a way that is fulfilling to the individual and society.

There is a solution to the situation in which mankind finds itself. It is not a quick fix nor does it happen overnight. It is perseverance in our journey into inner knowledge and exploration of our unconscious. The only solution for the external problems mankind has created is within. If we fix the individual, then we can fix society.

Spiritual blindness can be corrected. The path to repair begins within each individual. It can begin by self reflection and inner truthfulness. Transformation never comes from an outside source. The information for change comes from within not without. It is the responsibility of each individual to find the secrets of change and to seek the higher path of redemption. The bringer of this knowledge is ourselves. We can begin to transform the world, and for the first time actually see reality as it really is instead of through the *klippot* that cover our eyes. We must remove the cause once and for all in order to remove the chaos and confusion. The conscious mind must be made subject to the authority of the unconscious soul consciousness. As long as we entertain our fears, prejudices, worries, and anxiety, the negative emotions and actions will continue to plague mankind. Soul consciousness is the channel for and the expression of the all-embracing Light of the Creator.

Understanding must precede the desire to change. One cannot desire what one does not know or understand. Once the eyes see and understand what it is seeing then the conscious mind can receive the input from the inner mind, cognize it, and arouse the desire and motivation to put into action the knowledge, which leads to manifest behavior and proper actions.

The *mitzvot* give expression to the unconscious. Spirituality is the proper expression of “religion”. Spirituality is not to be left to the field of theology or organized religions, but rather to the proper study of Scripture without the husks and projections of commentators, preachers, or theologians. We can return to the Source and see things as the Creator intended them to be seen. All we have to do is stop seeing with the physical eyes and begin to see with the eyes of our inner man.

We can leave Egypt everyday as we move from a state of consciousness called the small mind to the state of a big mind. It requires that we open ourselves up to an awareness of the Unity/*Echad* of Elohim and experience ourselves as included in Elohim’s Infinite Being. This shift of consciousness is called *gadlut d’mochin*. We can experience a temporary dissolution of the separate self as it is absorbed into the Unity of Elohim’s Infinite Light. We can exit our personal Egypt and be liberated into the expansive awareness of our interconnectedness

and interdependence with all Being as our heart/mid is opened up to Infinite Love (*Ahavah*). It is the mystical love for Elohim and for all being that motivates us to heal and transform the world. This awakening of the soul will lead us to social action to help relieve human suffering in all its forms. Torah study, meditation, prayer, doing a *mitzvah*, or reciting the *Shema* on a daily basis can help us experience and incorporate this “big mind” into our daily lives. Once we return to the Source of our individual human psyche, then we will know the truth of who we are, where we came from, how we got here, and Who sent us here in the first place. Religion cannot give us the answers as hard as it tries, but true spirituality that comes from within can give us a glimpse of the truths concerning these questions.

Last Word:

*****May I give a word of caution to the student of Scripture? Not everything that arises out of the unconscious mind has its source within us. Influences and impressions can be implanted into our minds through subliminal seduction, hypnosis, and mental manipulations. Our eyes and conscious and unconscious mind are to be guarded, just as Adam was placed in the Gan Eden to guard it. The mind is a two way door and not everything that enters is kadosh (holy). Guard your eyes and mind carefully. There are many false prophets and teachers who would desire to lead you away from truth.