

Beit Midrash YeshivahAI

Free Choice among the Nations

Command and Responsibility, the Root of Choice
and the Governance of Will



Research Booklet

ח' מרחשוון תשפ"ז

Free Choice among the Nations

Purpose of the study. To investigate a particular aspect of free choice among the nations: how the commands and responsibility of Noahides can be reconciled with statements denying them choice; how Jewish authors differ; and what can be inferred from talks in which the denial explains a relative ease of influencing a non-Jew. The inquiry includes the Sages, medieval and later authorities, Kabbalah and Chassidic teaching, including Chabad sources. The sources must not all be made to share one definition of freedom before each author's position has been established.

The statement “non-Jews have no choice” might be understood to deny the possibility of refraining from murder or theft. Such a sweeping reading does not fit Maimonides' account of the individual Egyptian, and does not exhaust the Chabad sources either. Conversely, translating every denial as “no control over the outcome” misses passages about thought, will and agreement. The central inquiry lies between these extremes.

The study asks five questions: what kind of choice responsibility requires; whether the denial attributed to the author of Bnei Yissaschar is substantiated; what accounts of the root of Jewish choice add; how choice, decree and exceptional intervention relate; and whether an explanation has been found for the difference between a Jew and a non-Jew in the very same moral decision.

What has been established. Major sources explicitly discuss a non-Jew's choice and responsibility. There are substantive disagreements about hardening the heart, voluntary action within causality, and the governance of a king. Affirmations of choice were found in the writings examined of the author of

Bnei Yissaschar; the sweeping attribution of its denial remains unverified. Chabad sources support a distinction between the root of choice and the capacity granted to Noahides through command, as well as particular explanations of decree and danger from a person with choice. Connecting all these to every statement about the ease of influencing a non-Jew’s will is still not a complete textual interpretation.

The booklet presents the arguments, alternatives, retractions and counterexamples. An entire chapter records the rounds of work and the participants’ contributions, asking what would be missing without each one. References and limits of reading appear at the end. A companion Reader’s Booklet explains the reasoning accessibly and directs readers here for fuller study.

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1. The Questions and the Shared Test

The starting point is both practical and conceptual. Two people face an opportunity to harm or to help. One is said to have choice; the other is said not to. What has actually changed? Is the second unable to refuse, more driven by his nature, subject to providential frustration of his action, or endowed with a real capacity whose source is different?

Six matters are therefore examined separately: **the source of the capacity; the practical alternative; motive and decision; performance; the effect on another person; responsibility and recompense.** A person's capacity may be granted from above while the content of the decision is still attributed to him. A motive may make one path harder without closing it. The decision may be his while success depends on circumstances. None of these possibilities by itself proves what happens in the others.

The subject also varies: humanity in general, Israel, a particular non-Jew, a king acting in office, or an angel. Ordinary conditions, miraculous intervention and the punitive withholding of repentance must be distinguished. A distinction that works for Pharaoh does not thereby describe every non-Jew; nor does a distinction in the soul's root automatically define every decision.

2. The Sages and Maimonides: Responsibility and a Practical Alternative

The Noahide discussions in Sanhedrin concern command, warning and liability; Bava Kamma discusses Torah study and reward. These anchor responsibility, but do not by themselves supply a complete philosophy of what causes willing. Similarly, "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven"

singles out moral decision without detailing here the mechanism of the capacity or every difference of spiritual level.¹

Maimonides adds a decisive statement. In Laws of Repentance 5:1, every person is given the freedom to turn toward good or evil. In 6:5 he applies the principle to every Egyptian who harmed Israel: had the Egyptian not wished to harm them, he was free not to. The decree of Israel's enslavement does not appoint this Egyptian as its agent. This describes the possibility of refraining from the action itself, rather than merely a free thought accompanying an unavoidable act.²

Eight Chapters, chapter 8, distinguishes natural temperament from compulsion. A trait may make an action easier or harder; education and habit matter precisely because a person can act and shape himself. Not every inward pull closes the alternative. Nor is God's will to create a choosing person a will that compels each particular sin.

Withholding repentance is an exception. In Laws of Repentance 6:3, earlier sins may be punished by preventing the way back. Pharaoh is not presented as lacking choice from birth: he first sinned of his own accord. The same ruling mentions Israel in Elijah's time. The distinction is between ordinary conditions and a particular punishment, rather than a permanent boundary between Israel and the nations. A particular blockage does not establish that every decision throughout the person's life has been erased.³

Three further questions in Laws of Kings remain distinct: a Noahide's being commanded; the standing of one who observes because God commanded in the Torah; and the laws of error and

1. Sanhedrin 56b–57b; Bava Kamma 38a; Berakhot 33b; Niddah 16b. Reward alone does not establish that all authors define freedom in the same way.

2. Maimonides, Laws of Repentance 5:1–4; 6:5. The numbering follows common printed editions; some databases divide the paragraphs more finely.

3. Maimonides, Laws of Repentance 6:3; Eight Chapters 8, on Pharaoh and the withholding of repentance. Responsibility rests on the voluntary sins preceding the restriction.

duress. The conditions for being “one of the righteous among the nations” are not conditions for the very capacity to choose. The text also distinguishes a factual mistake from ignorance of a prohibition one was obliged to learn. Within halakhic limits, it recognizes a person’s wish to perform an additional mitzvah for reward. That permission alone does not define the source of the capacity, but neither may the will it recognizes be dismissed.⁴

3. Decree and Hardening the Heart: Substantive Disagreements

Nachmanides on Genesis 15:14 explicitly disputes the sufficiency of Maimonides’ explanation that no individual agent was designated. He discusses acting from hatred or for plunder, exceeding the decree, and the difference between a hidden decree and a disclosed prophetic mission. Even within a divine course of events, a person has no license to conclude that his evil act is a mitzvah. His responsibility may include both his intention and the additional harm he inflicted.⁵

On Exodus 7:3, Nachmanides upholds two explanations: repentance withheld as punishment, and Pharaoh strengthened when he would otherwise yield to the severity of the plagues. He cannot therefore be placed on only one side of the debate. Combining the explanations does not erase the difference between punishment for an earlier will and enabling a decision that is more than submission to pain.

In Sefer HaIkkarim 4:25, strengthening removes faintheartedness and lets a person return to his nature and choice; the possibility of attributing the plagues to chance forms part of the argument. Sforno on Exodus 7:3–4 emphasizes the

4. Maimonides, Laws of Kings 8:10–11; 10:1–2, 9–10. Knowing the prohibition and recognizing the source of the command must also be distinguished in the test cases below.

5. Nachmanides on Genesis 15:14. The disagreement concerns the rationale, rather than whether the Egyptians were responsible. On hardening the heart, see Exodus 7:3.

ability to endure the plagues so that repentance not compelled by fear remains possible. These explanations are close, but not identical: Halkkarim opens a way to interpret the event, whereas Sforno emphasizes endurance. Neither simply treats hardening as erasing the possibility of complete repentance.⁶

R. Saadia Gaon supplies direct evidence concerning non-Jewish kings. In *Emunot VeDeot* 4:5, he distinguishes power granted to Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar from their own choice, and their armies' choice, to kill and rob. Giving capacity does not transfer responsibility to its giver. The same chapter distinguishes a decreed loss from a thief's act: the loss could have arrived another way. It makes no ethnic distinction in defining this mechanism.⁷

The differences are substantive: Maimonides allows a punitive restriction; Sforno and Halkkarim explain how strengthening may preserve decision; Nachmanides upholds two explanations; and Saadia distinguishes the granted power from the chosen act. None amounts to a general statement that every non-Jew is compelled to sin.

4. Duties of the Heart and Crescas: Two Further Approaches

Duties of the Heart, Gate of the Service of God, chapter 8, presents the difficulty between actions seemingly entrusted to people and the Creator's rule. It cites different positions and favors a path in which a person acts as responsible for his deeds and trusts divine governance, while acknowledging the limits of understanding. This does not prove adoption of a philosophical mechanism identical to Maimonides' or Crescas'. In the Gate of

6. Sefer Halkkarim 4:25; Sforno on Exodus 7:3–4. Halkkarim 1:9 requires choice for civil life as well; 4:5 distinguishes chosen, compelled and mixed actions.

7. R. Saadia Gaon, *Emunot VeDeot*, treatise 4, chapter 5, R. Judah ibn Tibbon's translation: the questions about the thief, Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar. The additional report about Proverbs 21 in chapter 6 is not needed for the conclusion here.

Trust, chapter 4, choosing and consenting to service are distinguished from completing the action, which also depends on causes outside the person. Inward confidence that God will choose in one's place is not the path of service.⁸

R. Hasdai Crescas, in *Or Hashem*, treatise 2, principle 5, examines voluntariness and responsibility within a causal order. Possibility considered in the thing itself differs from non-necessity considered in the totality of causes. Will, the experience of coercion, pleasure and command are discussed within that system. "Could one have acted otherwise under exactly the same conditions?" is therefore not, by itself, a fair test of everything he says. Here too, a theory of humanity in general must not become a theory specially about non-Jews.⁹

The existence of such an alternative rules out one initial assumption: reward and punishment do not automatically commit every author to another author's definition of freedom. Yet responsibility within causality is not a ready-made Chabad explanation. Applying it to a particular talk requires a textual connection, beyond logical possibility.

5. The Person with Choice and the Victim: What Determines the Danger?

Or HaChaim on Genesis 37:21 explains Reuben's advice: danger from a choosing person differs from danger from an animal. His wording allows harm even to someone not sentenced to death. The Zohar's Vayeshev passage describes the difficulty of escaping enemies compared with the pit, but does not itself use

⁸. Duties of the Heart, Gate of the Service of God 8; Gate of Trust 4, fourth division. The distinction concerns choice and completion, rather than Israel and the nations.

⁹. R. Hasdai Crescas, *Or Hashem*, treatise 2, principle 5, chapters 3-6. Dot documented reading the scan. The account here distinguishes causal necessity from voluntary action without imposing Maimonides' definitions on Crescas.

the term “choice.” The explanation in terms of persons with choice is developed in commentaries and in the talk.¹⁰

In Or HaChammah, R. Chaim Vital must be distinguished from R. Moshe Cordovero. In the scanned text reported, R. Chaim Vital stresses that Joseph’s righteousness does not cancel his brothers’ choice. Cordovero discusses human beings, all the more so Israel, and rescue from animals being relatively easier with lesser merit. The statement about a righteous person must not be quoted as Cordovero’s wording. The “Ra’ag” mentioned on the page is R. Abraham Galante; R. Moshe Zacuto’s commentary is a different text.¹¹

Conversely, Iggeret HaKodesh 25 upholds both the evil of the aggressor’s choice and the decree concerning the injured person. Being an agent does not license evil; providence is not confined to an external outcome, since Shimei’s thought and the vitality sustaining him are also discussed. The necessary distinction is between sustaining the capacity and governing the event, on the one hand, and culpability for its evil use, on the other.¹²

The Rebbe’s letter of 26 Tammuz 5714 prevents two hasty conclusions. First, it allows a difference between Or HaChaim and the Alter Rebbe. It then proposes comparing danger from a person with choice to entering a dangerous place: greater merit is needed, while the decision remains from above. It notes that applying this proposal to Or HaChaim’s wording is strained.

¹⁰. Or HaChaim on Genesis 37:21; Zohar I, 185a-b, the unit on Reuben and the pit. Precise page divisions should follow the textual witness examined.

¹¹. R. Abraham Azulai, Or HaChammah I, Vayeshev, R. Chaim Vital’s and Cordovero’s comments on Zohar 185a. The commentary page heading reads 184. The separation of signatures is documented in R4-GB-026-028; that documentation is not an independent examination by the editor of every edition.

¹². Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh 25, the opening and discussion of Shimei ben Gera. Compare Sefer HaChinukh 241, the prohibition of revenge: the victim’s perspective does not cancel the aggressor’s obligations.

There is thus an identified reconciliation, but its limits must not be erased, nor Jewish choice placed outside providence.¹³

Likkutei Sichot VII, Vayikra II, explains the duty to return stolen property and make amends despite belief in decree. Missing money does not prove a permanent loss was decreed; repairing the harm may end a temporary loss. Choice concerns the injurious act and its responsibility, while providence over the victim is maintained. This significantly supports the act-outcome distinction; the talk alone does not supply a complete mechanism for influencing a non-Jew's will.¹⁴

6. A King, Public Governance and Miraculous Exception

Malbim on Proverbs 21:1 distinguishes the private individual's heart from a king's heart in public affairs. He describes a denial of choice in the public domain, with the inclination beginning in the heart before the act is completed. Summarizing this as “the outcome alone” is therefore unfaithful to the wording. The passage does not distinguish a Jewish king from a non-Jewish king, or give a parallel account of every private person.¹⁵

The discussion during the Chief Rabbis' visit in 5746 also raises a Jewish king and Saul. It matters precisely because a public decision may also concern a mitzvah. A distinction proposed by one participant is not the Rebbe's conclusion without

¹³. Igrot Kodesh IX, letter 2832, 26 Tammuz 5714; the passage also appears in Likkutei Sichot XXX, p. 297. The letter says “particularly the children of Israel, whose choice is truly free”; “particularly” cannot be replaced with an explicit denial of all choice in others.

¹⁴. Likkutei Sichot VII, Vayikra II, pp. 9–19, especially 14–18. Its emphasis on restitution and another person's pain prevents reducing responsibility to an abstract offense with no wrong against a human being.

¹⁵. Malbim on Proverbs 21:1. Compare Meshekh Chokhmah, Va'era, beginning “God spoke to Moses, saying: I am the Lord; speak to Pharaoh”: the contrast between Israel and Pharaoh is accompanied by the role of kings and must not be extended to all the nations.

examination. The word “king” alone does not resolve the overlap between public office and prohibition.¹⁶

In Midbar Shur 16, by R. Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook, canceling choice is an especially exceptional miracle because of the value of the order being broken. The discussion itself assumes ordinary choice among the nations. It does not establish that intervention is impossible for Israel, or the permanent condition of every non-Jew. The bibliographic correction matters: the book is not by the Netziv.¹⁷

7. Bnei Yissaschar’s Author: The Unverified Attribution and the Statements Found

In Bnei Yissaschar, Sivan 2:12, human choice provides the background for comparing the election of Israel with the election of the mountains. Mountains do not choose; humanity has choice. Tishrei 4:22 states a general principle about humanity and cites R. Moses Hagiz’s explanation that divine knowledge does not compel Pharaoh. Tishrei 7:4 follows the same direction. The author’s principle must be separated from his paraphrase of Hagiz.¹⁸

In Adar 4:3, the initial consideration of Haman as a person with choice does not end in a sweeping denial. Providence is also described as placing the idea of the lot in his heart. In Kislev–Tevet 4:80, and its parallel in Reiach Dudaim, the non-Jewish king’s choice may help him turn away from persecution, in connection with fear of royal authority. Influence from above and

¹⁶. Hitvaaduyot 5746 II, pp. 838–839, record of the Chief Rabbis’ visit. Questions, participants’ proposals and the response must be distinguished.

¹⁷. Midbar Shur, discourse 16; see also discourse 29. Discussing a miracle does not establish an ordinary absence of choice.

¹⁸. Bnei Yissaschar, Sivan 2:12; Tishrei 4:22; 7:4. Grok Bot’s examination distinguishes Sefaria’s edition metadata from the Piotrków 5644 printing he read in a scan.

choice thus appear within the same discussion. Two parallel works are not independent evidence of two different positions.¹⁹

A direct reference was added in VeHayah Berakhah, Berakhot 5:1, on Bartenura's "even a snake": a non-Jewish king is described as having choice, and his free choice explains interrupting prayer even in uncertain danger. The snake is distinguished as lacking choice. This is strong positive evidence against attributing a blanket denial to the author; examining the first edition's scan remains outstanding.²⁰

Two attribution errors were identified. The statement about angels on the page found in Agra DePirka belongs to the Agra DeTzvi layer by R. Tzvi Hirsch Meisels, rather than R. Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov's text. In Agra DeKallah, Yitro 34, "under nature" and "disposed toward the opposite" build on Maharal and concern readiness for Torah. They do not explicitly state that the nations cannot choose otherwise. A discussion of the absence of repentance likewise differs from denying choice.

Finding: the sweeping attribution to Bnei Yissaschar's author remains unverified. Actual affirmations of choice are before us. Yet not all his writings were read continuously, and some scans could not be searched effectively. The search limits do not prove that no other passage or internal distinction exists.

8. Breslov and Other Chassidic Sources: Scope, Inclination and Intervention

Likkutei Moharan II:54 connects the scope of choice with divine service: a Jew's action, even a journey, involves service; among "others," some things are compulsory. The second side is expressly partial. The passage does not list all actions or discuss

19. Bnei Yissaschar, Adar 4:3; Kislev–Tevet 4:80. Reiach Dudaim, pp. 36 and 48–49 (Hebrew pagination: לו, מזח–מט). Parallels and textual layers are documented in R4-GB-006–011.

20. VeHayah Berakhah, Berakhot 5:1, beginning "even a snake," p. 82 (פכ) in the newer edition reported. The scanned witness is documented in R4-GB-014; no claim is made about all printings.

control over every bodily event. Identifying “others” with the nations is natural in the contrast, but they are not the same word; a later textual witness reported only in a search snippet does not settle the wording’s history.²¹

II:110 rejects the feeling of having no choice because of habit. This strongly opposes treating habit as coercion, but “every person” alone does not prove that the passage is meant to identify the “others” in teaching 54. Audience and subject may differ. Reading 110 does not necessarily “overturn” 54; nor should the two be declared irreconcilably contradictory.

Kedushat Levi, Fourth Sanctification for Purim, describes action within Ahasuerus’s thought, alongside turning Haman’s thought to a good outcome without making his intention good. In Yitro, removing the Egyptians’ choice is described as a wonder. These descriptions allow intervention in a decision; they establish neither that every ordinary non-Jewish decision is compelled nor the converse that every decision outside a miracle is free in every sense.²²

Mei HaShiloach on Beshalach presents apparent freedom to indulge desire as enslavement. Its forceful language about the will’s condition and the intellect’s rule must be retained. Yet the passage beginning “The Lord will fight for you” rejects invoking God’s will as an excuse for evil; in Tetzaveh, the knowledge that all deeds are linked to God’s will is taught through reverence, lest it produce frivolity. This context of divine service is not an exhaustive philosophical mechanism for every non-Jewish choice.²³

21. Likkutei Moharan II:54, 110; Likkutei Etzot, Fear and Service 32. The later wording “the nations of the world” awaits a scan and examination of an early edition.

22. Kedushat Levi, Fourth Sanctification for Purim; Yitro, section 10. Changing Ahasuerus’s thought must be distinguished from reversing Haman’s plan; the language of miracle must retain its context.

23. Mei HaShiloach, Beshalach, beginning “They shall return and encamp” and “The Lord will fight for you”; Tetzaveh, “You shall make an altar for burning incense.”

9. The Soul's Root and Power to Affect the Worlds

Ramchal, in *Derekh Hashem* 1:3, defines a capacity to choose knowingly and willingly between two sides. In 2:4 he describes differences in the level of humanity and the roots of Israel and the nations, while recognizing that someone from the other nations can uproot himself and join by choice. The context is conversion. It demonstrates capacity in joining; the general definition for humanity belongs in the chapter addressing it, rather than loading every moral decision onto the conversion statement alone.²⁴

Nefesh HaChaim 1:3–8 explicitly addresses a Jew and explains his actions' power in the spiritual worlds. "To him alone" contrasts him with other powers and worlds, rather than explicitly denying a non-Jew's responsibility. Power in the worlds, the soul's source and moral freedom are not interchangeable names for one thing.²⁵

The same care is needed with Maharal: preparation, disposition and inclination do not by themselves prove the absence of an alternative. Conversely, the appearance of a verb of refusal does not alone prove freedom in the strongest philosophical sense. Each unit must be examined for what it defines as compelling. The relation between "evil in essence" and choice requires its complete source, rather than a verbal parallel to Eight Chapters.

Pardes Rimmonim 4:9, cited by *Likkutei Torah*, discusses knowledge and choice. In the passage Grok Bot read in a scan, human choice is associated with Malkhut, from which level downward there are two paths. Israel and the nations are not

²⁴ *Derekh Hashem* 1:3; 2:4. In 2:8, human circumstances and stellar influence are discussed; that chapter alone does not establish compulsion in moral decisions.

²⁵ *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:3–8, especially 4 and 7. R. Tzadok, *Tzidkat HaTzaddik* 130, assumes choice even when changing one's root is limited; the additional findings from *Yisrael Kedoshim* and *Sichat Malakhei HaSharet* require reading complete units.

explicitly distinguished. A higher root of capacity and a level at which two paths open are not necessarily contradictory answers; but Likkutei Torah's use of the reference requires comparing both arguments directly. A Kabbalistic source mentioning Israel and David as examples does not thereby deny choice to everyone else.²⁶

10. Chabad: The Root of Choice and the Capacity Granted through Command

Letter 1089 reserves free choice for Israel and defines complete freedom as the absence of a compelling cause, including an inward one. The question is more than whether a person deliberates: it concerns the source of willing and its dependence on nature, intellect and desire. Letter 5871 explains the root of choice in the divine Essence and Israel's connection to it through the analogy of father and son.²⁷

The latter letter offers two explanations of reward and punishment among the nations. The first treats them in terms of cause and effect, alongside a difficulty the Rebbe notes from Maimonides. In the second, command itself raises Noahides above their nature and enables both paths in the matters commanded. This positively grounds a real capacity; receiving a capacity does not make its recipient's decision imaginary.

The two explanations are not formulated as an exhaustive map: "choice within the seven commandments, compulsion outside them." That is a possible synthesis proposed in the research, rather than the letter's conclusion. Grammatically, the borrowed designation also refers to reward and punishment in the first

²⁶. Pardes Rimmonim, gate 4, Essence and Vessels, chapter 9; Kraków 5352 printing, folio 28. R4-GB-055 documents the transcription and a scanned excerpt; the precise function of Likkutei Torah's reference remains open.

²⁷. Igrot Kodesh IV, letter 1089 (א"פ"ט), 6 Tammuz 5711; XVI, letter 5871 (ה'תתע"א), 25 MarCheshvan 5718, pp. 92–93. The printed reference "35b" is retained as printed; the identified unit in Likkutei Torah is 38b.

explanation, rather than silently making choice in the second explanation borrowed too.

The Shemini 5747 talk describes real choice for Noahides within the seven commandments. Sefer HaSichot 5749 describes Jewish human choice as resembling God's choice. These are two different comparisons: Noahides in relation to Israel, and a person in relation to the Creator. A statement about God's choice of Israel must not be transferred to human capacity without evidence. "As though compelling" in 5749 likewise concerns how service performed by command is highlighted; it does not remove the evil alternative the talk itself recognizes.²⁸

In the discourse Kevod Malkhutkha, 5660, choice is discussed at the level of intellect alongside concealed pleasure and inclination from the root. A hidden reason need not be compulsion; this does not establish that every unconscious cause is non-compelling. The discourse concerns the divine and animal souls, so extending its mechanism to every rational being is interpretation. Nor does the abbreviation "ג" in its note permit printing a conjectural expansion as the source's wording.²⁹

Letter 405, Elul 5708, reserves for a Jew the possibility of changing his assigned role. It qualifies our knowledge of an event's conformity to the higher intention, and itself refers to Iggeret HaKodesh 25. This strengthens a distinction between the chooser's role and the victim's judgment; it does not give the chooser sovereignty over another's fate. The recurrence of "His charge ... preserved their spirit" in 5736 is a significant verbal connection, but still does not prove that every denial in the talk has been resolved through one definition.³⁰

²⁸. Hitvaaduyot 5747 III, Shemini, pp. 175–176; Sefer HaSichot 5749 II, p. 538, note 35, continuing p. 537. "Note 4" is the numbering in the later Shaarei Emunah compilation, not in Sefer HaSichot.

²⁹. Sefer HaMaamarim 5660, Kevod Malkhutkha, pp. 15–16; Hemshekh 5672 I, chapter 60, on transcendent knowledge and acting through one's own power. It has not been shown that the capacity command grants a Noahide is defined there as uncreated.

³⁰. Igrot Kodesh II, letter 405 (ת"ה), Elul 5708, pp. 392–396; excerpted in Likkutei Sichot XIII, pp. 164–165. The heading gives no exact day of the month; none should be supplied by conjecture.

11. Two Explanations Concerning Pharaoh

Likkutei Sichot XXVII, Kedoshim II, distinguishes the individual Egyptian from Pharaoh. An individual may refrain from becoming the agent. For Pharaoh, the discussion accepts the problem that political enslavement must proceed through him, and locates punishment in the wickedness of his heart. This is more than an editorial invention separating intention from performance: it has an identified basis in an edited teaching approved by the Rebbe.³¹

This corrects a sweeping claim made during the research: it is wrong to say there is no source for responsibility centered on intention when a particular performance is assumed necessary to a decree. Yet not every Egyptian or every non-Jew occupies Pharaoh's position. The source itself distinguishes them. It does not specify here every aspect of what the moral alternative would look like in practice, or permit enslaving others on the claim of fulfilling a decree.

A different explanation changes the premise: a prophecy of calamity can be canceled, so the decree need not entail an unchangeable performance. This is explained on Pesach Sheni 5744. Here, the possibility of changing the calamity leaves the matter dependent on Pharaoh's will. The answers differ at their starting points: one examines responsibility on the assumption of necessary performance; the other does not accept unchangeable necessity of performance.³²

³¹. Likkutei Sichot XXVII, Kedoshim II, pp. 149–157, especially 153–155, sections 5–6 and their notes. Not every paragraph in Shaarei Emunah may be attributed to just one source listed at the compilation's end.

³². Hitvaaduyot 5744 III, Pesach Sheni, pp. 1701–1706, sections 23–27, especially p. 1705. Compare Likkutei Sichot XXVII, p. 153, note 35. This is an unedited transcript, of a different status from the approved text in Likkutei Sichot.

12. The Persecutors and the Guard: Testing the Same Decision

In the talk of 12 Tammuz 5728, section 13, the persecutors are described as lacking choice; the same sentence says they sensed and decided to fight when they saw actual activity. The denial therefore cannot mean absence of psychological deliberation. Yet it cannot simply be transferred to the outcome either: the description concerns reaction and decision themselves.³³

Section 48 describes a Jewish guard taking the initiative to help during the imprisonment. His having choice adds to the wonder. Neither comprehensive repentance nor adoption of Admur HaRayatz's outlook is required here: this too is outward assistance. Thus "a non-Jew is easier to influence because only outward assistance is needed" does not suffice to distinguish him from a Jew.

Conversely, the story does not say that influence from above cannot act on a Jew: the assistance occurred. The difference concerns difficulty and wonder, while the internal mechanism is not specified. It might involve a changed motive, arranged circumstances or another special mechanism. The word "miracle" alone does not decide whether the alternative was removed.

Noach 5731 describes influence through the heavenly ministers toward assistance from the nations below, alongside the duty to make practical efforts. A path of influence is explicit, but it does not define how choice in a commanded matter is maintained when the same action includes a prohibition. Trust in divine

³³. 12 Tammuz 5728, sections 13–14 and 47–49, unedited. Section 13 and the guard's story are two contexts within the same talk; an identical mechanism must not be assumed.

governance cancels neither action nor the possibility that a particular request will not be granted.³⁴

13. 5736: Source, Translation and Context

The relevant passage is in the Simchat Torah 5736 talk. The unedited Yiddish transcript says, within the account of the refusal after the Six-Day War, that non-Jews have no choice and that His charge preserved their spirit. It then compares the difficulty of influencing Jewish politicians with the relative ease concerning non-Jews. The immediate context is political; the paragraph does not discuss God's choice between equal bodies.³⁵

The Six-Day War paragraph also appears in the Hebrew version, at the top of p. 190; its place in the paragraph sequence differs. An opposition between “past in Yiddish and future in Hebrew” therefore cannot be built on the photograph of p. 189 alone. That would be incomplete reading, not evidence that editing changed the entire conceptual structure. The versions are not identical; preserving their differences does not establish historically who added or omitted each word.

Visual reading of p. 134 also corrects the automated recognition: שמרה רוחם, “preserved their spirit,” rather than שלטה רוחם, “ruled their spirit.” This does not solve the question, but a new argument about the intensity of control must not rest on a misread word. Here a photograph is superior to computerized search.

A significant detail in Likkutei Sichot III was also settled: “(אידן)” occurs in the Yiddish original, and Hebrew “(יהודים)” translates it. The parentheses still need interpretation: identifying the

³⁴. Noach 5731, sections 8–14, Lubavitch Library transcription; Hitvaaduyot, pp. 236–242. The seven Noahide commandments appear in the unit, but it contains no exhaustive division covering every moral decision.

³⁵. Sichot Kodesh 5736 I, new expanded edition, pp. 133–134, the students' unedited transcript; Hebrew version: Simchat Torah 5736, pp. 187–190, unedited.

tormentors as Jews does not alone explicitly state that every non-Jew lacks all choice. The brothers' Noahide legal status is discussed there concerning majority evidence; it does not simply establish the root of their souls.³⁶

Note 45 refers to the Alter Rebbe's Responsa 28; "25" was a report's reading error, not a variant in an examined witness. The responsum concerns permitting an agunah to remarry, and is numbered 29 in the Zhitomir 5607 edition. It also addresses the definition of miracle and whether testimony must allow for a miracle. It is not the textual source of the distinction between choosing people and snakes; that belongs to the commentators cited in note 46. Tanya's Iggeret HaKodesh 25 is a different work.

14. Seven Proposals: What Was Accepted and What Was Limited

Proposal 1: A difference in the root and degree of freedom

The distinction is grounded in the letters and accounts of Jewish choice. It explains why a granted capacity is not described identically to one associated with the soul's root. The missing link is how this changes the ease of influencing the very same moral decision. Without a mechanism, "degrees" is insufficient. Status: an established basis with a proposed extension.

Proposal 2: Choice extends as far as command

Choice is positively affirmed in Noahide commandments; Breslov offers a structural parallel linking service and choice. This does not expressly deny everything outside that domain. An additional mitzvah, a journey, and a moral act without awareness of

³⁶. Likkutei Sichot III, Vayechi, pp. 837–839; Shaarei HaMoadim, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, pp. 41–43 (מא–מג). The introduction attributes headings, arrangement and translation to the editors.

command test the boundary. Status: a tool for mapping, rather than an exhaustive division.

Proposal 3: Intention is free and the outcome is providential

The distinction helps with aggressor and victim. The Pharaoh explanation adds a case in which necessary performance is also assumed, while blame attaches to wickedness of heart. It cannot be extended to every Egyptian, since an individual is expressly given the alternative of refraining from the act. The practical talks also concern decision; “outcome alone” is therefore no general solution. Status: well-grounded in particular places; its generalization was rejected.

Proposal 4: Choice is denied only to a king

Malbim grounds this in public governance, and it explains some discussions of Pharaoh. It does not cover a private non-Jew; a public decision can also be a mitzvah or a sin. Bnei Yissaschar’s author also describes a non-Jewish king with choice. Status: a separate line of inquiry to examine author by author.

Proposal 5: Outward help versus inward repentance

Different tasks may explain different difficulty in persuasion. They do not by themselves explain the difference between people, since a Jew too can give outward help. The guard in 5728 is a direct counterexample. Status: rejected as a sufficient explanation, while retaining the useful distinction between tasks.

Proposal 6: Exceptional intervention in exercising a real capacity

Granting ordinary capacity is no promise that governance will never change the conditions of its exercise. Sources on miracles in thought and on withholding repentance give this content. Yet claiming that an alternative was closed requires identifying that

intervention in the source and clarifying the remaining basis of responsibility. Section 13 of 5728 is not formulated solely as a miraculous exception. Status: the strongest local proposal, still unproven as a comprehensive mechanism.

Proposal 7: More than one line of explanation

Different positions, and even different answers to different questions within one author, may not combine into one division. Its strength is fidelity to differences of definition. Its cost is leaving tension when two statements concern the same decision. It does not establish that an author historically retracted a position. Status: a valid research framework, rather than a resolution of every source.

Three further extensions were rejected: an uncreated root deciding in the person’s place; a rule that every hidden motive cannot compel; and Jewish sovereignty over another’s life outcome outside providence. Sources on the root of capacity do not establish that the root determines an act’s content. The precise expression “through his own power” requires retaining the decision’s attribution to the person.

15. Test Cases within the Same Decision

Case	What can be said	Limit
A non-Jew refrains from murder out of conscience	On Maimonides’ account, the person can refrain from the act.	Recognizing the command’s source and the status of righteous gentile are additional questions.
A Noahide performs an additional mitzvah	A wish to perform it for reward is recognized within halakhic limits.	How the capacity of choice is granted in this act remains undecided.
An individual Egyptian	Can avoid becoming the agent; the decree is no personal appointment.	Maimonides’ words must not be replaced with the special Pharaoh explanation.

Case	What can be said	Limit
Pharaoh, with necessary performance assumed	His punishment is attributed to wickedness of heart.	Not every detail of the moral alternative is explained; enslavement is not permitted.
Pharaoh, where calamity can change	Changing the decree leaves room to change the act.	This differs from the previous explanation's premise.
Jews from whom repentance is withheld	A punitive exception after voluntary sins.	No denial of all capacity or natural law of an entire nation follows.
A king decides on a forbidden policy	For Malbim, the public heart is directed; other sources also hold a ruler responsible.	"Political" does not exempt murder and theft from prohibition.
A Jew harms or helps	Choice and responsibility coexist with providence; outward help occurs for him too.	No sovereignty over the victim; the type of task gives no comprehensive explanation.

The persecutor is the sharpest test. If command gives a real possibility of refraining from bloodshed, and that possibility is here denied in the same sense and conditions, changing labels does not resolve the contradiction. A difference in time, domain, intervention or basis of responsibility must be shown. Without evidence, the distinction remains a proposal.

16. The Study's Conclusion

The direct conclusion: the examined sources do not justify presenting "non-Jews have no choice" as a general Jewish denial of a non-Jew's capacity to refrain from sin. Maimonides expressly rules that out in the Egyptian example; Chabad sources positively recognize a capacity granted to Noahides in their commandments. Alongside this, actual statements of denial must not be erased.

The proposed reading distinguishes the source of capacity, its scope and the governance of its exercise, studying each source according to its question. Real choice can be granted from above; capacity to choose is no guarantee of control over outcomes; influence on motives need not cancel an alternative. Particular cases also describe actual restriction or necessary decree; their basis of responsibility must then be examined separately.

Chassidic teaching identifies a distinctive root of choice in Israel. There is no justification for erasing this to fit every source into one definition of freedom. Equally, it must not become a blanket exemption for Noahides or a Jew's power to harm outside divine determination. Both exceed the evidence.

What remains open: no single explicit explanation has been found showing how real choice within command and the relative ease of influencing a non-Jew's will fit together in every talk, especially where the decision itself is prohibited harm. The proposal that the difference of root is expressed in the manner of intervention is meaningful and possible, but its decisive link still needs a source.

A stage of research can therefore end with a useful booklet while this question remains visible within the explanation. Complete reporting does not require artificial resolution of every disagreement. The appropriate next step is criticism of the text and a few focused sources, rather than repeating the entire inquiry to replace cautious language with certainty.

17. How the Research Was Conducted: Rounds, Corrections and Contributions

This chapter describes the path from the initial question to the present text. Its purpose is more than counting books mentioned by each participant: it shows what changed in understanding

through their work, which errors emerged, and which parts would remain grounded without them. The comparison concerns this record; it is no general ranking of models.

The fullest materials available are the four R3B reports and the available R4 reports. There are also initial editorial research, prompts, a scope-expansion document and a detailed brief. Not all original model reports from R1–R3 were assembled. The development of the question and documented corrections can therefore be described, but missing reports cannot be reconstructed, nor historical priority assigned because someone labeled a finding “new” in their own examination. A report evidences what was submitted to the project; it does not thereby establish the truth of every quotation it contains.³⁷

1. What was the task at each stage?

The starting point was a short, forceful statement: non-Jews have no choice. Examining it immediately required distinguishing inability to refrain from sin from absence of a particular level of freedom. Maimonides’ individual Egyptian became an unavoidable test: the passage concerns harming Israel itself. “Matters affecting Israel” could not simply be placed outside choice without examining what is said about the harmful decision.

The research question then changed too. Instead of seeking only an internal reconciliation of a Chabad expression, the inquiry was broadened to Jewish authors generally. This is more than adding medieval authorities as decoration to a Chabad chapter: each author’s meaning of “choice” must be studied, with real disagreement allowed. The differences among Maimonides, Nachmanides, HaIkkarim, Sforno, Crescas and Malbim thereby became central.

³⁷. Working record: initial editorial research R1; scope expansion R3; four R3B reports; editorial brief R4. These document the inquiry’s history, rather than substitute for reading the books.

Stage	Documented question and work	What it enabled
R1: editorial foundation	Letters on choice, Maimonides, Pharaoh, providence and test cases. An earlier Torah discussion of the difficulty was also identified.	Moral choice became a condition for testing explanations; the study did not assume every denial meant the same thing.
R2: partial record	Later reports mention earlier discussions; the record does not include every participant's complete report from this round.	Retractions identified later are retained; missing work details or scores are not invented.
R3: scope expansion	A general Jewish inquiry was formulated, with each author read according to his question. Dot's report became a comparison base.	Temperament, responsibility, kingship, miracle, soul-root and outcome were distinguished, without forcing agreement with Chabad.
R3B: four reports	Grok focused on responsibility; Grok Bot located and checked texts; Claude expanded Chassidic and Kabbalistic coverage; Dot set out positions and counterexamples.	A substantive source map emerged, with attribution errors and interpretive extensions still requiring criticism.
Brief before R4	The editor collected fourteen checks: textual witnesses, context, command, compelling causes, Pharaoh and the same moral decision.	Specific gaps determined tasks; peers' reports were treated as claims to check.
R4: four participants	Approved texts, scans and complete units were added; explicit retractions of earlier explanations were recorded.	The two Pharaoh explanations were separated; textual details settled; outward-assistance theory and the 5736 context corrected.

Stage	Documented question and work	What it enabled
R4: Grok 4.7 joins	Broad reading of medieval and foundational works, with declared non-reading of most decisive Chabad sources.	Saadia and Duties of the Heart received fuller treatment; the Hebrew–Yiddish comparison needed correction.
Editing V1	Arguments integrated; editorial checks; seven proposals, test cases and a book log. The booklet was submitted for criticism.	A unified text made it possible to test whether qualifications survived into the conclusion.
Expansion in V2	This chapter and the missing-contribution test were added. No new V1 review reports were present.	Report quality and importance to the outcome could be assessed separately. Earlier review inputs stayed fixed.

The initial research also addressed an earlier Torah exchange: proposals in He’arot U’Biurim, objections to their explanatory force, and a further reply. The models must therefore not be credited with inventing the question or all distinctions discussed. Their contribution here is assessed through locating, checking and testing claims and clarifying limits. The questioner also has a research role: requiring wider scope, examination of the same decision, and this accounting of each participant’s contribution.

2. Six turning points in the inquiry

From general responsibility to an alternative in action.

Reward and punishment show responsibility, but do not alone define freedom for every author. Maimonides’ individual Egyptian adds an explicit alternative of refraining. This ruled out an overly easy approach: saying a non-Jew merely feels he chooses, or remains responsible with no alternative, without showing that this is the source’s position. Crescas remains important, but is no automatic interpretation of Maimonides.

From an apparently avoidable disagreement to two Pharaoh explanations. Initially, responsibility might have been based only on a different choice of act, or only on harm added beyond the decree. Examining the approved text in volume XXVII revealed an explanation in which Pharaoh's identity as agent is assumed necessary and punishment rests on wickedness of heart. Pesach Sheni 5744 supplied another: changeable calamity leaves performance dependent on will. The contribution is not a new slogan about "levels," but two starting premises that must not be merged.

From the victim's fate to the aggressor's role. Statements about a Jew changing his role were sometimes read as determining another's fate outside heavenly judgment. The 5714 letter, Iggeret HaKodesh 25 and restitution discussion required restraint. The aggressor's guilt remained distinct from governance concerning the victim. Neither the wrong against another person nor the obligation to repair it could be erased.

From verbal parallel to the actual subject. Breslov's "others" was reconsidered; Nefesh HaChaim's power in the worlds examined; Ramchal's conversion discussion separated from his definition of the choosing human being. Useful parallels remained without turning every soul-level into a definition of moral capacity. "Under nature" likewise does not automatically mean "unable to decide otherwise."

From a search finding to a textual witness. "25" in the Likkutei Sichot note proved a misreading rather than an alternative edition; the angels statement belonged to Agra DeTzvi; and Or HaChammah's signatures distinguished R. Chaim Vital, Cordovero and Galante. These are more than spelling corrections: each changes whose evidence it is and what it can prove.

From assumed context to a complete 5736 unit. The immediate context is political refusal and relative ease of influence, rather than God's choice between equals. Reading the Hebrew continuation prevents a past-future opposition based on p. 189 alone. The Yiddish scan reads "preserved." A difficult statement about decision itself remains after correction: textual verification prevents an artificial problem without removing a real one.

3. Each participant's contribution and research cost

Grok: keeping responsibility central

In the available reports, Grok maintained the direct halakhic test: an Egyptian can refrain from harm, and a political decision may also be theft or bloodshed. This prevents metaphysics from drifting away from the action to which recompense attaches. Grok tended to favor the letter's second explanation while retaining the practical statements' difficulty.

The test is not his alone: it already appeared in the editorial foundation and other reports. Confusion between references 6:3 and 6:5 also needed correction. In the available R4 message, Saadia and Duties of the Heart were identified, but no reading as broad as Grok 4.7's was supplied. The actual role was chiefly reinforcing and checking the foundation's consistency. The local file mentioned is unavailable; this assessment does not fill it in.³⁸

Grok Bot: references, layers and editions

Grok Bot contributed a cluster of checks that general reasoning cannot replace: Dinov writings, Hagiz, VeHayah Berakhah, the Agra DeTzvi layer, "אִי" in the Yiddish original, the Alter Rebbe's responsum and Or HaChammah's signatures. The striking example is VeHayah Berakhah's non-Jewish king: beyond a general statement about humanity, this is a halakhic explanation

³⁸. Grok: R3B report in the combined four-report file; R4 message supplied in the conversation, findings 4-7 and the ruler discussion. The available message must be distinguished from the local file it mentions.

comparing a non-Jew with choice to a snake. It strengthened resistance to attributing blanket denial through an unidentified report.

The added value includes correcting the checking rules: “the whole book” was clarified as a database search, rather than continuous reading. “25” was corrected to “28”; the 5736 witnesses were compared without inventing the editors’ actions; and the 5746 reference was found to verify a particular unit, not necessarily everything in a later compilation. Conversely, the reports wrongly attributed Midbar Shur and extended the victim’s judgment too far. Corrections count toward consistent criticism, rather than making an original error an additional finding.

His reading scope must also be distinguished from Dot’s. Both read part of the approved Pharaoh source. Grok Bot documented part of p. 154, whereas Dot read the talk and notes more broadly. The source is therefore not exclusive to one, nor did both cover exactly the same material.³⁹

Claude: broadening the map and testing the model internally

Claude developed the distinction between the source of the capacity of choice and the decision attributed to a person. He expanded Breslov, Ramchal, Nefesh HaChaim and concepts of preparation and inclination. In the 5660 discourse he read text and note, separating an abbreviation’s letter from its conjectured expansion. A valuable restraining contribution was resisting direct transfer from power in the worlds, soul-source or dominance of desire to moral responsibility.

Some of the proposed model nevertheless exceeded the evidence. The argument from “מצוי” was dropped; the generalization that a hidden cause cannot compel was rejected;

³⁹. Grok Bot, R4: Dinov checks 1–15; Responsa and Or HaChammah 16–28; the letter and its printings 29–37; Pharaoh 38–44; 5736 witnesses 52–54. Each item specifies scan, search and inference.

and the 5736 context corrected. Even after adding II:110, “every person” alone cannot settle “others” in II:54. This booklet retains Claude’s strong distinctions and retractions without reinstating the extensions he qualified.

Some benefit appears precisely in what remained unsettled. The source read did not define the capacity command grants a Noahide as uncreated; the later identification of “others” with the nations remained a search finding; and the parallel between changing one’s role in 5708 and 5736 was no complete mechanism. An apparently exhaustive model thereby became a defined program of inquiry.⁴⁰

Dot: turning distinctions into decisive tests

Dot repeatedly pressed what happens in the same decision. If a non-Jew is commanded not to murder, calling his decision “political” is insufficient; if a Jew also gives outward assistance, the type of help alone is not the difference. The 5714 letter supplied an identified reconciliation about danger, alongside the strain the Rebbe himself notes. The Pharaoh explanation enabled a move from general responsibility to explicit intention and performance.

The distinctive R4 contribution was more than locating the volume XXVII source, which Grok Bot also examined: Dot read the further Pesach Sheni 5744 explanation and separated the two premises. This corrected an editorial claim too: responsibility focused on wickedness of heart is not always the editor’s invention, yet cannot apply to every non-Jew. Volume VII’s limited role was also defined: restitution and repairing harm do not fully explain ease of influence over will.

Dot too had to retract outward assistance as sufficient explanation and qualify the claim against intention-centered

⁴⁰. Claude: R3B report, especially 5660, 5672 and Breslov; R4 findings 1–14 and 24–25, and the self-criticism unit. II:110 and the later Likkutei Etzot wording do not have identical evidentiary status.

responsibility. The value of this criticism is that the preferred proposal continued to face the same counterexamples applied to others. The answer became less closed, but its limits more testable.⁴¹

Grok 4.7: deeper medieval coverage and criticism needing completion

Grok 4.7 joined an already developed inquiry. Its contribution must not be measured as though it opened an empty file, nor credited with first adding Saadia and Duties of the Heart: both were in the brief. The addition was development: Saadia on power granted to Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar and their armies; and choosing service versus completing it in Duties of the Heart. Explicit non-Jewish kings are more useful than a general claim resting only on “human being.”

This prompted the editor to return to Saadia’s chapter 5 and the Duties of the Heart units and integrate them into the discussion. That is real gain in breadth and explanatory precision. It does not prove that the Chabad conclusion depends on Grok 4.7: its report declares that it did not read the crucial letters and talks. Detailed disclosure of reading limits helps, but transparency cannot replace missing reading.

The proposed contrast between Hebrew future and Yiddish past was not accepted in its overall form. It read p. 189 without continuing to 190 and relied on recognizing the Yiddish as “ruled.” The photograph shows “preserved,” and a previous scan report documents the Hebrew continuation. The medieval expansion and willingness to label a personal explanatory link as proposed were retained; the conclusion about the witnesses was

⁴¹. Dot: R3B, especially sources and tests in units 2–3; R4 findings 1–9, 11–18 and 22–25. The approved explanation and Pesach Sheni explanation are read separately there.

limited. The report remains valuable without claiming it settled the difficulty.⁴²

The editor and questioner: selecting questions and deciding the text

The editor has a role not counted by new sources: recognizing when reports answer different questions, returning to sources, and ensuring that retractions reach the conclusion. Independent and incomplete editorial checks are detailed in the next chapter. Responsibility for integration does not pass to whoever submits the longest report or to the number agreeing with a claim.

The questioner directed the scope and set a test of usefulness: is the inquiry understandable, what did each participant add, and what would be missing without them? This request also requires measuring the organizer’s contribution. Task division, a shared brief and preservation of errors affect all results; the system cannot be attributed wholly to one model’s abilities.

4. Who found, who verified and who changed the argument?

Three questions differ: where a finding first appeared in the available record; who read the source personally; and who showed that it changed the explanation. One participant may locate a source, a peer verify it, and the editor or a third participant turn it into a counterexample. Each link contributes differently. Two independent readings are not two sources; a translation or compilation is not another independent witness to the same talk.

Issue	Documented path	Avoiding double counting
The Egyptian can refrain	Already in the editorial foundation; examined in several reports.	No later participant exclusively owns an existing foundation.

⁴². Grok 4.7, R4, especially findings 4-7, 14-15 and 36-40, its non-reading declaration and proposed link. Saadia and Duties of the Heart were in the R4 brief before it joined.

Issue	Documented path	Avoiding double counting
The 5714 letter	Dot’s R3B finding; editorial reading of the transcription; scans and printing comparisons by Grok Bot and Dot in R4.	Later verification strengthens discovery without erasing its documented origin.
The guard in 5728	Discussed in reports; Dot sharpened it against the outward-assistance explanation.	Finding the story and making it a counterexample are different contributions.
Pharaoh in volume XXVII	Dot read the unit and notes; Grok Bot read a scanned passage against the compilation.	Partial corroboration exists; separating changeable calamity requires the further reading.
Dinov and the snake	Grok Bot found VeHayah Berakhah’s explicit case; other participants already had general affirmations.	The example is new in the record; caution about attributing denial did not begin there.
Saadia and Duties of the Heart	Previously named and assigned; Grok 4.7 expanded; the editor checked units and integrated them.	New development is not first introduction of an author’s name.
The 5736 wording	Context and continuation to p. 190 were already required in the brief; scan reports and Yiddish checks strengthened implementation.	A later conjecture based on a partial photograph does not cancel an earlier reading of the continuation.

The shared brief creates further dependence. A participant given a reference may read it independently and add a new interpretation, without independently discovering its address. Conversely, the reading has value even if the reference was supplied. Here discovery, verification and interpretation are more useful measures than counting “new sources” without attribution.

5. What if one participant had not taken part?

This tests the documented record. It is not an experiment conducted with five alternative teams. It asks what would remain

from existing materials, what would need replacement, and how deeply the current explanation would be affected. There is no basis to say a finding could never have been reached without a particular participant; another search might have supplied it. That possibility does not erase the actual work, but prevents claims of unproven indispensability.

Two removals must also be distinguished. Removing only the latest report leaves sources already passed to peers. Removing the participant's entire contribution may also remove questions and references that prompted others' work. The second is closer to the questioner's concern, but less securely reconstructible. Known dependence is therefore recorded; untested subsequent history remains conjectural.

Without Grok

The available study would lose some concise criticism preserving the non-Jew's moral decision and the first explanation's difficulty. Yet Maimonides, the 6:3/6:5 distinction and the ruler case already occur in the editorial foundation and other reports. No central element in the available record came solely from Grok without corroboration. The main conclusion would remain grounded; the documented loss is chiefly further verification and focused synthesis.

Without Grok Bot

A broad group of edition and textual-layer checks would be missing: VeHayah Berakhah's non-Jewish king and snake; attribution to Agra DeTzvi; numbering the Alter Rebbe's responsum; and precise separation of Zohar commentators. The 5736 witness log and note comparisons would be thinner. Dot or the editor corroborates some corrections, so the entire booklet would not necessarily be wrong; the textual inquiry could not be presented as equally complete.

The core recognition of Egyptian choice and the conceptual difficulty would remain. The Dinov and textual-witness chapters, however, would require actual alternative checking or omission of particular claims. This contribution changes evidence's weight even when it does not replace the general conclusion.

Without Claude

The Chassidic and Kabbalistic map would be less developed: service's scope in relation to choice, capacity versus power in the worlds, and the source of capacity versus what decides. Some sources also occur in Grok Bot and Grok 4.7, so not all would disappear. Bringing them together to test the root-based model is nevertheless significant.

Removing Claude would also spare some interpretive errors he proposed; that must be acknowledged. The net value is not every heading introduced, but the distinctions surviving criticism and retraction. Non-Jewish responsibility would remain established, while the explanation of why a soul's level does not immediately define moral capacity would lose depth.

Without Dot

Sources for responsibility would remain, including Grok Bot's partial reading of the approved Pharaoh source. The case would not be wholly unanswered. The main loss is critical integration: the danger letter and its qualification; the two Pharaoh explanations kept separate; and the guard as a test against outward help versus inward repentance.

These additions changed the conclusion's limits, beyond the number of sources. Without them, the risk of a uniform "act versus outcome" or "intention alone" solution would grow. Reaching the current precision would require someone else to check the notes and construct these counterexamples. The halakhic foundation would remain; the ability to discriminate among explanations would weaken substantially.

Without Grok 4.7

The study would not lose Maimonides, the letter’s two explanations or identification of the practical difficulty. Saadia and Duties of the Heart were already assigned. What would be missing is the developed reading of non-Jewish kings and their armies, and the connected account of choosing service versus completing it. Medieval coverage would be narrower or require other work on those units.

This matters for breadth and precision, but does not prove that the central conclusion would otherwise have been unavailable. The conjecture about the two 5736 witnesses supplied no grounded solution, and decisive Chabad sources were unread. Its medieval contribution therefore carries greater weight than its role in the internal Chabad conclusion. That distinction is precisely the new measure’s benefit.

6. The missing-contribution measure: separate from report quality

The following scale measures loss visible in the record: 0 — no demonstrated gap; 1 — reinforcement, verification or explanation; 2 — substantive expansion without changing the central conclusion; 3 — substantive change to an argument or correction; 4 — a central component without adequate replacement in the record. The score is no percentage of truth, measured time saving or forecast for a different project.

Participant and score	Documented loss	Existing support	Effect on the result
Grok — 1	Verification and focused synthesis of responsibility.	Editorial foundation and peers’ Maimonides readings.	Main conclusion remains; no exclusive decisive source shown.

Participant and score	Documented loss	Existing support	Effect on the result
Grok Bot — 3	Layers, editions and VeHayah Berakhah's example.	General Dinov statements, some scans and Dot's corrections.	Attribution and textual chapters weaken and need completion.
Claude — 3	Development of root, capacity, service and influence.	Overlapping sources in the editor, Grok Bot and Grok 4.7.	Foundation remains; conceptual explanation loses depth.
Dot — 3	Separating Pharaoh explanations and testing the same decision.	Halakhic case and partial approved-source reading.	Limits of reconciliation need rebuilding; generalization risk increases.
Grok 4.7 — 2	Deeper Saadia and Duties of the Heart.	Authors and questions already in the brief; responsibility sources available.	Map narrows; Chabad conclusion does not depend on it.

No participant receives 4. The available record does not justify saying that removing one participant alone would collapse the main conclusion with no adequate substitute. This does not mean contributions are easily replaced: completing a textual chapter or rebuilding a counterexample requires real work. It also does not alter the quality scores below. One weighty source can change research more than dozens of accurate pages repeating the foundation.

Cross-checking is another benefit. Two distinct source readings confirming a detail reduce dependence on one reader's local error. But several reports repeating one reference from the brief do not equal that many independent confirmations. The measure therefore describes a particular contribution, its corroboration and dependence; it is no list of winners.

7. Ten quality criteria and the retained scores

The following quality tables are retained from V1: a 1–10 scale and the series’ fixed weights. They assess accuracy, attribution, evidence versus inference, new sources, verification and transparency, logic, consistent correction, peer criticism, clarity and limits of conclusion. The missing-contribution measure is separate and does not retroactively change the average. No new reports justify assigning “final-round” scores here.

The editor’s self-assessment is identified as such. A missing report is not zero; where a criterion cannot be assessed, the average uses only measured weights. Numbers rest on the examples given, rather than a controlled experiment in model capabilities.

Grok — 7.5

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Content accuracy · 15%	8	The Egyptian’s responsibility distinguished from withholding repentance.
Attribution and context · 15%	7	6:3/5 references corrected after earlier confusion.
Evidence vs. inference · 15%	8	Explanation 2 preferred as a proposal, without proving exclusivity.
New sources · 10%	6	Main contribution checks already identified units.
Verification and transparency · 10%	8	The Drive file was unread; the limitation was stated.
Logic and depth · 10%	8	The ruler test usefully joins decision and prohibition.
Consistent correction · 10%	8	Numbering correction explicit; explanation 1’s limit retained.
Peer criticism · 5%	6	Some Crescas verification relies on a peer’s report.
Clarity and usefulness · 5%	8	Short, direct report with a useful comparison table.

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Conclusion and limits · 5%	7	Preference for 2 is sound; ease of influence remains unexplained.

Grok Bot — 8.5

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Content accuracy · 15%	8	Mostly accurate; extension concerning the victim was limited.
Attribution and context · 15%	9	Author, glossator and Or HaChammah signatures separated.
Evidence vs. inference · 15%	8	Inferences marked; heavenly-judgment claim needed restraint.
New sources · 10%	9	VeHayah Berakhah and Agra DeTzvi change attribution.
Verification and transparency · 10%	9	Detailed scan and edition logs; searching is not reading.
Logic and depth · 10%	8	Reading the whole Adar paragraph prevents inferring from its opening.
Consistent correction · 10%	9	25 to 28, Midbar Shur and note 35 explicitly corrected.
Peer criticism · 5%	8	Checked peer claims and supplied source addresses.
Clarity and usefulness · 5%	8	Extensive report and useful reconstruction, sometimes fragmented.
Conclusion and limits · 5%	8	Limits negative search; some generalizations remain open.

Claude — 8.3

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Content accuracy · 15%	8	Root and capacity well distinguished; II:110 overgeneralized.
Attribution and context · 15%	8	Political context corrected; “others” not identified conclusively.

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Evidence vs. inference · 15%	8	Personal model marked; the synthesis is not equally cautious everywhere.
New sources · 10%	8	II:110 and Kedushat Levi, Yitro, add tests.
Verification and transparency · 10%	9	Transcription, scan and unopened search results distinguished.
Logic and depth · 10%	8	The necessity–inclination–condition test is useful and more limited.
Consistent correction · 10%	9	Hidden-cause rule and equal-alternatives context retracted.
Peer criticism · 5%	8	Accepts criticism about the Noahide’s granted capacity.
Clarity and usefulness · 5%	9	Clear map of positions and connected explanation.
Conclusion and limits · 5%	8	II:110/54 and assigned-role claims need qualification.

Dot — 9.0

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Content accuracy · 15%	9	Distinguishes two Pharaoh explanations and responsibility in each.
Attribution and context · 15%	9	Read units and notes rather than relying on a compilation.
Evidence vs. inference · 15%	9	Explicit explanation distinguished from proposed application.
New sources · 10%	9	The approved volume XXVII source fills a real gap.
Verification and transparency · 10%	9	Defines scan, unit and scope; printing history remains open.
Logic and depth · 10%	9	Places the forbidden decision itself at the test’s center.
Consistent correction · 10%	9	Retracts sufficient outward-help theory and blanket objection to intention.

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Peer criticism · 5%	8	Tests peers' conclusions without scoring unread material.
Clarity and usefulness · 5%	9	Focused findings and corrections ready for integration.
Conclusion and limits · 5%	9	Does not turn a local explanation into a universal mechanism.

Grok 4.7 — 7.9

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Content accuracy · 15%	8	Useful medieval map; partial 5736 comparison.
Attribution and context · 15%	7	P. 189 alone cannot determine an entire witness.
Evidence vs. inference · 15%	9	Personal link marked and its Yiddish difficulty acknowledged.
New sources · 10%	8	Saadia on royal armies and Duties of the Heart are useful.
Verification and transparency · 10%	9	Detailed, undisguised list of unread sources.
Logic and depth · 10%	7	Miracle alone does not prove an ordinary uncoerced alternative.
Consistent correction · 10%	N/A	No earlier choice report from this participant to test personal retraction.
Peer criticism · 5%	7	Some peers' full reports unread.
Clarity and usefulness · 5%	8	Connected explanation clear; missing-material lists repeat.
Conclusion and limits · 5%	7	Hebrew proposal limited, but its missing reading not completed.

The average uses 90% of the weight; an unavailable score is not zero.

The editor — self-assessment — 8.3

Criterion and weight	Score	Evidence in the record
Content accuracy · 15%	8	Practical responsibility retained alongside denials.
Attribution and context · 15%	8	Authors and references separated; some scan evidence indirect.
Evidence vs. inference · 15%	9	Explicit text, interpretation and proposed mechanism distinguished.
New sources · 10%	7	Checking Saadia and letters adds more verification than discovery.
Verification and transparency · 10%	9	Scan reports not presented as independent viewing.
Logic and depth · 10%	8	A uniform test prevents substituting outcome for decision.
Consistent correction · 10%	9	“Preserved,” p. 190’s role and earlier generalizations corrected.
Peer criticism · 5%	9	Each participant’s retractions and limits retained.
Clarity and usefulness · 5%	8	The study stands alone; the number of sub-inquiries is demanding.
Conclusion and limits · 5%	8	No overclaim; comprehensive connection remains open.

No separate average is given for every round: R1–R3 reports are incomplete, so were not scored. Known retractions are described; the numbers concern the available later responses. The editor’s score is provisional and open to criticism of this very text.

8. Why proceed to writing, and what follows criticism?

The project moved to a booklet when the foundation for the principal questions was identified, substantive errors corrected and the gap defined clearly enough to state openly. More general searching might add material, but is not a condition for a qualified conclusion. Conversely, the labels “essence,

providence and responsibility” do not become an explicit mechanism merely because the sources are all listed.

The prepared R5 criticism remains addressed to V1; its prompts were unchanged. V2 expanded process documentation and comparison. V3 corrects the subject’s title and opening and removes source links under the series rules; it contains no new review reports. Further responses are to be assessed against the current text before integration.

Under the questioner’s updated instruction, a Reader’s Booklet is being built on the corrected study. It explains the reasoning simply and with the required depth, referring to chapters and pages in Research V3. Round documentation stays in the research. The four prompts—for Grok, Grok Bot, Claude and Dot, excluding Grok 4.7—address explanatory clarity, understanding and design alone, without further source research.

18. Limits of Verification and Three Focused Follow-ups

The booklet rests on supplied source texts and documented R3B–R4 checks. The editor returned to foundational sources and central letters in transcription, and to the 5736 witness in a photograph. Examination of other books’ scans also relies on identified reading reports. Renewed access to some external scans was blocked during preparation; independent editorial viewing must not be claimed. A source entry and a scan report are not two separate proofs.

Not all original R1–R3 reports were assembled. Unavailable responses were therefore not reconstructed, and this is not claimed as a complete edition of every historical exchange. Current reports, limits and retractions are retained in the archive. An unopened source is not assigned a conjectural

position to fill a table; this applies also to Shomer Emunim, Shelah and some Breslov sources.

Book log: what was read and what supports the claim

“The editor” below means independent examination for this booklet. “Scan report” means reading reported by an identified participant; it must not be marked as editorial viewing. A search finding is not a complete source and does not alone ground a conclusion here.

Source and scope	Reading status	Result for the inquiry
Repentance 5–6; Kings 8–10; Eight Chapters 8	Transcriptions; the editor rechecked chapter 6. Other units also in R3B–R4 reports.	An Egyptian’s alternative of refraining; repentance withheld as exception.
Saadia, treatise 4, chapter 5	Unit read in transcription by the editor; other chapters expanded in Grok 4.7.	Kings’ and armies’ choice differs from granted power.
Duties of the Heart, Service 8 and Trust 4	Service discussion and trust paragraphs in transcription; expanded in Grok 4.7.	Limits of knowledge; choosing service versus completion.
Nachmanides, HaIkkarim and Sforno at cited locations	Source units in transcription; repeated readings in the medieval-source reports.	Disagreement on rationale and hardening’s function.
Or Hashem, treatise 2, principle 5	Dot’s scan report; Grok 4.7 read Daat. The editor’s renewed access failed.	Voluntariness within causality, rather than ethnic denial.
Or HaChaim 37:21; Iggeret HaKodesh 25; Chinukh 241	Discussion units in transcription; not all scans retained in the record.	Preserve victim’s judgment versus aggressor’s guilt.
Or HaChammah on Vayeshev; Alter Rebbe’s Responsa 28	Detailed Grok Bot scan report, including signatures and edition numbering.	Attributions corrected; agunah responsum is not the source of choice itself.

Source and scope	Reading status	Result for the inquiry
Bnei Yissaschar; Reiach Dudaim; VeHayah Berakhah	Transcriptions and Grok Bot scan report; Dot's Reiach Dudaim comparison.	Affirmations found; attribution of denial unverified.
Agra DePirka and Agra DeTzvi layer	Page and heading scan report; search of only some editions.	Angels statement is not Bnei Yissaschar's author's own text.
Maharal; Agra DeKallah, Yitro 34	Units in Claude's transcription report; further "evil in essence" source incomplete.	Preparation and inclination do not alone prove necessity.
Likkutei Moharan II: 54, 110; Likkutei Etzot 32	Unit transcriptions. "Nations" in the later witness is a search snippet.	A single word does not settle a variant or contradiction.
Kedushat Levi; Mei HaShiloach; Midbar Shur 16	Source-unit transcriptions in reports; Midbar Shur identified as R. Kook's.	Miracle, enslavement to desire and ordinary freedom distinguished.
Derekh Hashem 1:3; 2:4, 8; Nefesh HaChaim 1:3–8	Claude read units in transcription; Grok 4.7's scope narrower.	Root, conversion and power in the worlds are distinct.
R. Tzadok, Tzidkat HaTzaddik 130	Transcription; the two additional sources reported only as search snippets.	Limiting change of root does not prove compelled decision.
Letters 1089, 2832 and 5871	Transcriptions; editor rechecked the latter two. Some printings scanned by Dot and Grok Bot.	Definition of freedom, two accounts of recompense and danger proposal.
Letter 405 and the 5699 letter	Unit transcriptions; questioner's language separated from the Rebbe's answer.	Changing one's role is not sovereignty over another's fate.
Likkutei Torah, Emor; 5660, pp. 15–16; 5672	R3B readings, including a 5660 scan report; not all scans reopened by the editor.	Intellectual decision; capacity's root does not decide in the person's place.

Source and scope	Reading status	Result for the inquiry
Likkutei Sichot III, VII and XXVII	Dot and Grok Bot scan reports by unit. Renewed editorial download blocked.	“יִדְא” witnesses, repairing harm and two Pharaoh explanations.
Shemini 5747; Sefer HaSichot 5749	Scan reports; original note 35 identified on p. 538.	Noahide choice and person–Creator are different comparisons.
12 Tammuz 5728; Noach 5731	Talk transcriptions in reports; editor also opened the 5728 transcription.	Guard and persecutors test the same decision.
Simchat Torah 5736	Editor viewed Yiddish scan and Hebrew photograph; Grok Bot checked p. 190.	“Preserved” confirmed; supposed missing past paragraph restricted.
Chief Rabbis’ 5746 visit; Meshekh Chokhmah, Va’era	Earlier reading reports; focused speaker-by-speaker checking still needed.	The king question stays separate from the nations generally.
Pardes Rimmonim 4:9	Grok Bot scan report and Grok 4.7’s opening reading; not a work on non-Jewish choice.	Knowledge and choice are the subject; no explicit ethnic denial.

Important access failures to preserve include scans not downloaded again, books with defective text layers and Breslov commentaries not located. They limit a negative claim that no source exists. They do not erase a positive source that was read, or permit importing a quotation from another report as though read in the original.

Follow-up 1. Likkutei Torah, Tetze 36c, following “a reflection of a reflection” in 5728: is there a link between the soul’s root and influence on will, or only a distinction of identification? Only the former would directly strengthen the intervention model.

Follow-up 2. Further comparison of the Alter Rebbe's Responsa 28, the Zohar commentators and the 5714 letter: does difficulty of rescue require changing the aggressor's choice, or can rescue occur without changing it? This may affect the move from danger to influence on will.

Follow-up 3. Set the 5746 king-and-Saul discussion against the two Pharaoh explanations. Check for an explicit distinction between moral content and political performance, and identify what remains a question. Breslov wording and Maharal's second source can also be completed as actually needed, without delaying presentation of what is known.

19. Photographed Source Excerpts

The Yiddish excerpt presents the nations' refusal and the comparison with politicians in sequence. "Preserved their spirit" is legible in the photograph. The Hebrew photograph is another witness; its note numbering must not be equated with every other edition.

בשעת מ'האט געוואלט אומקערן שטחים גלייך נאך מלחמה ששת הימים,
איז געווען א נס אז די אראבער האבן ניט געוואלט נעמען, ווייל זיי האבן
מורא געהאט אז אפשר נארט מען זיי אפ, און מ'ווייל מאכן עפעס א "סדיק"
וכו', מאיזה סיבה שהי' האבן זיי ניט מסכים געווען - וואס די אמח"ע
סיבה בדבר איז דערפאר וואס דער אויבערשטער האט אזוי געוואלט, ווארום
גויים האבן דאך ניט קיין בהירה, ופקודהו ית' שמרה רוחם.

- איז אז די פאליטיקער זאלן השובה טאן און פאלגן די אנשי הצבא
- איז דאס זייער א שווערע זאך צו פועל'ן, ווארום ס'קען ניט זיין אז
ער זאל א טעות האבן, ער איז דאך שוין אויפן ביינקל 25 יאר, איז דאך א
סימן אז ער איז מקובל על הבריות, דארף ער טאן לויט ווי ביי אים קומט
אויס - איז א שווערע זאך פועל'ן ביי זיי חשובה טאן;

אבער בנוגע צו די גויים איז גרינגער צו איינקערן זיך מיט זיי,
ווארום דער אויבערשטער וועט מאכן אז זיי זאלן אויף דערויף ניט מסכים
זיין!

Sichot Kodesh 5736 I, p. 134. Excerpt from the unedited transcript.

לה. (וסיים כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א:) שהפוליטיקאים יעשו תשובה
 וישמעו בקול אנשי הצבא — קשה מאוד לפעול, כיון שמדובר אודות
 מי שחושב שלא יתכן שיטעה: זה 25 שנה שהוא יושב על הכסא, סימן
 שהוא מקובל על הבריות, והרי "קול המון כקול שדי"י"!...
 אבל בנוגע לגויים — כיון שאין להם בחירה²⁴⁵, קל יותר להתמודד
 עמם, כי הקב"ה יעשה נס שהם לא יסכימו על זה!

(244) ספרי בהעלותך ט, יו"ד. הובא
 בפרש"י וישלח לג, ד.
 (245) ראה אג"ק חט"ז ס"ע צב. וש"נ.

(242) ישעי' ד, ב.
 (243) שם ח, יו"ד.

Simchat Torah 5736, p. 189, photograph supplied to the study. In the Hebrew witness, the Six-Day War paragraph continues at the top of p. 190.

20. Further Study in the Sources

A selection for direct study, arranged by the authors' periods. These passages clarify central distinctions; this list does not replace the notes or source archive.

Berakhot 33b; Niddah 16b; Sanhedrin 56–57; Bava Kamma 38a. Distinguish command, fear of Heaven, responsibility and the level of reward.

Saadia, Emunot VeDeot 4:5. Study the thief, Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar: what is granted from above and what is attributed to the agent?

Duties of the Heart, Service of God 8; Trust 4. Examine knowledge's limits and choosing service versus completing it.

Maimonides, Repentance 5–6; Eight Chapters 8; Kings 8–10. Distinguish ordinary choice, withholding repentance, knowledge of prohibition and the observer's standing.

Nachmanides on Genesis 15:14; Exodus 7:3. Study his objection to Maimonides' rationale and the two reasons for hardening the heart.

Or Hashem, treatise 2, principle 5; HaIkkarim 1:9; 4:5, 25.

Compare voluntariness within causality with alternative possibilities and mixed outcomes.

Sforno on Exodus 7:3–4; Maharal, Tiferet Yisrael 1. Compare strengthened endurance under pressure with preparation and inclination.

Pardes Rimmonim 4:9; Or HaChammah on Zohar I, 185.

Separate Cordovero and R. Chaim Vital; examine two paths, danger, merit and miracle.

Or HaChaim on Genesis 37:21; Derekh Hashem 1:3; 2:4.

Compare capacity's source, soul-level and an alternative action.

Kedushat Levi, Purim IV and Yitro 10; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh 25. Examine intervention in thought, the aggressor's act and the victim's judgment.

Nefesh HaChaim 1:3–8; Likkutei Moharan II:54, 110.

Distinguish power in the worlds, scope of service and habit mistaken for coercion.

Bnei Yissaschar, Sivan 2:12; Tishrei 4:22; 7:4; Kislev–Tevet 4:80. Study the affirmations of choice and retain attribution of Hagiz's statements.

Mei HaShiloach, Beshalach and Tetzaveh; Malbim on Proverbs 21:1; Midbar Shur 16. Distinguish enslavement to desire, kingship and exceptional intervention.

Igrot Kodesh, letters 405, 1089, 2832 and 5871; Likkutei Sichot III, VII and XXVII. Read each letter and talk according to its question, testing the combined proposal's limits.

12 Tammuz 5728; Noach 5731; Simchat Torah 5736; Shemini 5747; Sefer HaSichot 5749, pp. 537–538. Set denials of choice against affirmations of capacity within the same decision.