

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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#### From Manipulation to Malchus - A Purim Inspired Message

The Ramchal teaches us that our free will is given to us so that we can own the reward for choosing to do Ratzon Hashem and thereby experience the greatest pleasure that there is, Oneness with Hashem, Perfection.

In order for this to truly be owned by us, the alternative must be compelling, real and desirous, for how else would our saying "NO!" "I prefer to fear Hashem because I love Hashem and I choose to emulate Him and to trust that there is no other power! I disbelieve the seemingly real reality because I know with certainty that there is Hashem Who is the Place of All Reality and thereby I know that serving Him is my choice no matter how REAL the fear and the consequences, even Gd forbid if I should die, may I not have such a test!"

In the story of Purim, we see how Haman manipulated and politicked and more. He did everything humanly possible to affect opinion and implement destruction against Klal Yisroel. Why did he not succeed?

We know Esther was terrified to go to Ahashveros, for it meant that she could be killed in addition to meaning that she would be forbidden after that to her husband, Mordechai. The fear and terror were very real. And Esther did not know until she saw Mordechai riding the horse being honored with Haman leading him that Hashem had accepted the teshuva of the Jewish people.

We are here in a reality of this world that is full of adversity and we tremble at the dangers posed to us. And, because we have no prophets, we have no real way of knowing what is going on in the Divine Mind, other than the rules set forth in Torah, including the Oral Law – which I mention here because it is on PURIM that the Jews allowed the Oral Law into their beings with love and full acceptance. By looking at the events over the many years that the Purim story took place, the Jewish people can see without doubt that there is constantly participation and interest in our lives.

We can incorporate the Oral Law into our lives too. What is it that we most fear? Are there circumstances where we feel victimized or at the hands of other people or institutions? Yes, these circumstances feel very real and can do much harm, if we believe them and look no further. I suggest an alternative.

It is okay to believe that there are forces at work, causing us stress and distress and pain and suffering. BUT, it is NOT okay to believe that these forces have any power whatsoever. There is ONLY One Power, and that is Hashem.

What exactly is the feeling of fear that is coming up? Tease it apart a moment and find the components that might represent a lifetime of similar fears, a patter,, a common thread. Is our belief and reaction when experiencing this feeling in concert with Hashem's middos? Perhaps we are not bearing insult as He would, perhaps we are not forgiving, as He would, perhaps we are taking revenge, as He teaches us not to, perhaps we are putting the crown on OUR head and taking for ourselves instead of putting the crown on His Head and asking for what we need and want, like the paupers that we are. And that is malchus. The Tomer Devora describes Malchus (see excerpt reprinted below – see italics especially).

Our energy needs to be directed only secondarily at effecting external circumstances when we are upset and afraid. Instead, we must primarily look inside ourselves to see if and how we have disconnected from Hashem's Attributes and from His Unity and immediately do teshuva and return to making ourselves a vessel for the Shechina. The place of the world and all its circumstances is Hashem, whether we are conscious of it or not! Either way, only His Will occurs. But to receive reward and pleasure, we must use our free will to emulate and connect, not to manipulate and see if the evil we have in mind for someone else happens to suit His Purposes. Why? Because there is another world, a

world where we will or won't receive eternity based on that choice, and more so, there is THIS world, where if we fail to do good, He sustains the world in the manner of our own evil. Yes, manipulation and politics look powerful and if a person believes they are powerful, it does have power over them! But this is not the path of someone who desires to fulfill the purpose for which Hashem created the world, for our own perfection.

Our goals at all times for our thoughts, speech and deed need to have something that we are in total control over – which is our efforts towards what thoughts, speech and deeds we have and do. In this way, we build our eternity and perfect ourselves.

May we, through sincere ahavas and yiras Hashem, create for ourselves Malchus and find fulfillment in connection and may our lives be enhanced by true simchas Hashem.

## How a person should accustom himself with the attribute of malchus

Firstly, one should not hold himself aloof with all that he possesses. Rather, **he should always consider himself as a pauper, placing himself before his Creator like the destitute, begging and pleading.** Even if he is a man of wealth, **he should accustom himself with this attitude, considering that none of his possessions belong to him and that he is forsaken, requiring the constant mercies of his Creator, having nothing at all besides the bread he eats. He should humble his heart and act as if he himself was a pauper, and especially at the time of prayer, for this is a wondrous, auspicious.** In contrast, it is stated: "Your heart may become aloof, and you may forget Hashem your G-d" (Devarim 8: 14) for external forgetfulness is common there with one who holds himself aloof. King David conducted himself very much with this attribute, saying: "...for I am alone and poor" (Tehillim 25: 16) – considering himself as a pauper. Since each member of a man's household must fend for himself before the Heavenly Court, what can anyone do for him? Of what help will even his wife and children be when he is judged before the Creator? Or when his soul departs, will they accompany him beyond the grave? What good are they to him in his time of judgment, from the entrance to his grave and beyond? Therefore, one should humble and perfect himself according to the essence of this attribute.

A second, extremely important method is explained in Sefer HaZohar (Vayakhel 198b). One should exile himself, wandering from place to place for the sake of Heaven, thereby becoming a vehicle for the exiled Shechinah. He should compare himself: "Behold, I exiled myself, but I have all my implements with me. But what about the honor of the Supreme One, for the Shechinah is exiled without Her implements, for they are lacking as a result of the exile?" For this reason, he should minimize his implements as much as possible – as it is written: "make for yourself implements of exile" (Yirmiya 46: 19), **He should humble his heart in exile, and bind himself to Torah, then the Shechinah will be with him.** He should also impose an 'expulsion order' upon himself, always banishing himself from the comforts of his home, just as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his comrades banished themselves and toiled in Torah. Better still, he should trudge by foot from place to place without horse or wagon. Concerning such a person, it is stated – **his hope is on Hashem, his G-d** (Tehillim 146: 5). As it is explained (Zohar Vayakhel 198a) the word *sivro* which can be read homiletically as *shivro*, derives from the word *shever* meaning breaking for he breaks his body for the honor of the Supreme One. Another very important aspect of the attribute of malchus – which is the gateway to all of Divine service, is to **fear the honored and awesome Hashem. Now, fear itself is extremely dangerous, in that it can cause a blemish and allow entry to the 'external 9evil) forces. For if the fear is from suffering, death, or Gehinom, it is actually a fear of the external forces themselves, since all of these functions derive from the external forces. However, the primary fear is fear of Hashem.** This is achieved by pondering three (four) things: **the first** – since the greatness of he Who fashioned all things is over all existence; and behold, man fears the lion, the bear, the terrorist, fire and a falling ruin, which are only minor emissaries. Why then should he not fear the great King, and have the awe of His greatness resting upon his face? He should say, "How can the despicable man sin against such a great Master? For if he angered a bear, it would gobble him up, whereas, because the Holy One, Blessed is He, tolerated insult, is this a reason not to fear His awesomeness and greatness?" **The second** – by imagining His G-d's constant Divine providence which observes and scrutinizes him. And, behold, a slave always fears his master when in his presence, and man is always in the presence of the Creator, Who carefully inspects all his ways. Thus, he should be afraid and terrified to be seen nullifying his commandments. **The third** – Since He (G-d) is the root of all souls, and all of them are rooted in His sefiros, a transgressor damages His sanctuary. Should he not fear that the King's Sanctuary will be

soiled by his evil deeds? **The fourth** – One should understand that his flawed deeds repel the Shechinah Above. One should fear lest he cause this great evil of diverting the King's (Hashem's) desire from the Queen (Shechinah). These kinds of fear set a person on the right path towards perfecting this attribute, enabling him to cleave to it.

Furthermore, a man should take upon himself with great care to do whatever possible that the Shechinah will cleave to him and not depart from him. Now, it is self understood that as long as he has not married, the Shechinah is not at all with him, since the Shechinah dwells with man mainly due to his female partner. For man stands between the two female aspects – his physical wife below in this world, who receives sustenance, clothing, and onah (marital) rights from him; and the Shechinah which rests above him, to bless him with all of these so that he will give them again and again to the wife with whom he has formed the covenant of marriage. His position corresponds to tiferes, which stands between the two female aspects of the sefiros – Imma Illa'ah (binah) which bestows to it (tiferes) all its needs; and Imma Tata'ah (malchus) which receives from it sustenance, clothing, and onah (marital) rights, which corresponds to chesed, din, and rachamim, as is known. But the Shechinah will not come to him unless he emulates the pattern of the Heavenly reality.

Now, at times a man separates from his wife for one of three causes: The first – She is a niddah; The second – he is engrossed in torah study and therefore separates himself from her on weekdays; the third – he goes on the road, and he guards himself from sin. At these times, the Shechinah cleaves and binds Herself to him and does not leave him, so that he is not abandoned and estranged. Rather, he is always a complete man, possessing both male and female elements. And since the Shechinah unites with him, man should be careful not to cause the Shechinah to separate from him. When he goes to on the road, he should be meticulous –thereby being rewarded- to recite the Traveler's Prayer and hold fast to the Torah. As a result, the Shechinah, which guards his way, will constantly stand by his side. When he is engrossed in Torah study, the Shechinah also stands with him, since he is careful not to sin and is engrossed in Torah study. So, too, when his wife is niddah, the Shechinah stands by his side if he observes the laws of separation properly. Then, on the night of her purification, on Shabbos night, or on returning from his travels – each of these being the proper time for fulfilling the mitzvah of 'marital relations' – the Shechinah Above opens Itself to receive holy souls, so, too, one should have marital relations with his wife at these times. In this way, the Shechinah will always be with him, as explained in the Zohar Parshas Bereishis (pg. 49a). Furthermore, marital relations with his wife should take place only when the Shechinah is in Her place, that is, between the 'two arms' (chesed and gevurah), However, when the community is in distress (i.e. famine) and the Shechinah is not between the two arms, it is forbidden. This is the explanation given in Tikkunim of Parshas Bereishis (Tikkun 69).

***One who wishes to unite with 'the King's daughter' (Shechinah) so that she never separates from him, must first adorn himself with all sorts of adornments and fine garments – referring to the perfections of all the attributes we have mentioned. After perfecting himself with these perfections, he should constantly concentrate on receiving the Shechinah while studying Torah and bearing the yoke of the mitzvos – according to the essence of the meaning of "Unification." Then, immediately, She (Shechinah) will attach Herself to him and not separate from him. But this Unification is on the condition that he purifies and sanctifies himself.*** And once one is pure and holy, he should contemplate on accomplishing to give Her (the Shechinah) sustenance, clothing, and onah rights, as these are the three things a man is obliged to provide his wife: 1) With all his deeds, he should bestow spiritual bounty upon Her, from the 'right', thereby sustaining her. 2). From the aspect of gevurah he should cover her, so that the external forces will not dominate her. Meaning, that there should be no aspect of yetzer hara in his performance of mitzvos, such as, for sake of physical pleasure or the prospect of imagined honor or similar personal benefits. For the yetzer hara is present in such a mitzvah, and She (Shechinah) flees from him, because it (yetzer hara) is considered 'ervah' (something of shame, literally private parts of the body.) Therefore, he must cover the 'ervah' and always conceal it, so that it (yetzer hara) will not dominate Her (Shechinah). How should this be done? All his deeds should be done for the sake of Heaven, without the yetzer hara having any part of it. In addition, tefillin and tzitzis are powerful shields for Her (Shechinah), preventing the external forces from dominating her, therefore he should be accustomed to wearing them. 3). He should unite Her (Shechinah) with tiferes through saying the Shema in its proper time and by establishing fixed times for Torah study. And when he sets aside a time for all these things, he should contemplate that this is "Ohah" for the Shechinah (which is considered a Supernal Woman), the King's daughter. This idea is alluded to in the tikkunim (tikkun 6).

In the Zohar on Parshas Bereishis (11a), Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai explains the torah's great and important advice as to how a person can be bound to the Supernal Holiness and conduct himself according to it, never becoming separated from the Supernal sefiros.

Man must act according to the time – meaning, to know which sefirah dominates at a particular time, so he can bind himself to it and carry out the rectification associated with the ruling attribute.

He starts off his explanation from man's obligations at night – the time when man retires to bed. The ruling attribute is then 'night' – the attribute of malchus. He then goes to sleep. But since sleep is considered like death –when the 'Tree of Death' rules – what should one do? He should prepare and proceed to bind himself to the essence of Sanctity, which is also the essence of the attribute of malchus in its aspect of holiness. For this purpose, when preparing to go to bed, he should concentrate on accepting the complete yoke of the Heavenly kingdom upon himself. Upon arising at midnight, he should wash his hands from the external forces that dominate them, removing the evil spirits from his flesh. He should then recite the blessing on Torah learning and rectify the Shechinah through Torah study. About this, it is said (Mishlei 6:22), "When you lie down, it will guard you" – from the external evil forces, "and when you awaken, your talk will be with Her (the Torah)". And She will be bound to you, and you to Her. Then his heavenly soul in Gan Eden will rise together with the Shechinah which enters there with the righteous. Tiferes will also come there to delight with the righteous, and be with him in their company, all listening to his voice (learning Torah). This way, he actually journeys together with Her (Shechinah) from a state of sleep and death to the essence of Heavenly Life, where he becomes bound to the essence of Gan Eden; and the light of tiferes, which shines upon the righteous in Gan Eden, begins to shine upon him. This is the explanation given in the Zohar on Parshas Terumah (130b). He arises early before the morning star ascends, and also begins to come and enter the Bais HaKnesses (synagogue), binding himself to the three Patriarchs. At the entrance to the Bais HaKnesses, he recites the verse, "And I, through Your abundant kindness, come into Your house; I bow toward Your holy sanctuary in awe of You" (Tehimmim 5:8), merging himself with the essence of 'Tiferes Adam' which comprises the attributes of chesed, gevurah and tiferes, and he enters into knesses (Yisroel), which is the attribute of malchus. He then meditates on the essence of the three Patriarchs when reciting this verse 'with Your abundant kindness' – corresponds to Avraham; 'I bow toward Your holy sanctuary' – corresponds to Yitzchak, for bowing – that is lowering one's stature towards the attribute of judgments and allowing himself to be pushed aside by it – derives from his side (the aspect of Yitzchak). Then the time of strict judgment will be pushed aside from him, for the bounty of compassion from Above will be bestowed upon this attribute to sweeten it. "In awe of You" corresponds to Yaakov, as it is written, "How awesome is this place..." (Beresheis 28:17), Behold, he has merged himself with them with his thought, speech and action. For 'thought' is the mediation we mentioned; 'speech' is reciting the verse, and 'action' is coming to the Bais HaKnesses and bowing towards His sanctuary.

Before the morning prayer (Shacharis), one should stand in the Bais HaKnesses (synagogue), his mouth a wellspring flowing with prayer, unifying yesod, the source of the wellspring, that opens into the well, which is the Bais HaKnesses. And he rectifies the Shechinah by concentrating to the best of his ability in his prayers.

When he leaves there, he ascends to the essence of Torah and binds himself to it, according to the essence of the attribute of day (tiferes). He conducts himself with it (this behavior) the whole day until the afternoon hours of Mincha, when he binds himself to gevurah. For in the morning he binds himself to chesed in his prayers, during the day to tiferes with his torah learning, and towards evening to gevurah. All this is in order to bind everything with the attribute of day (tiferes) which comes to the Bais HaKnesses to become unified with the essence of gevurah – the same way he did in his morning prayer with the aspect of chesed.

Between these two prayers, he also binds the Shechinah to himself by means of his meal, with which he grants kindness to the poor woman; as Hillel the elder used to say before going to eat "I am granting kindness to my poor guest (soul). "A righteous man knows the soul of his animal" (Mishlei 12:10). This can be explained as : One's intention in his meal should be to grant kindness to his animal soul and bind it to the essence of Mazon (literally food, referring to the numerical value of zion "nunsofeis which is aleph " lamed, hei vav yud "hei ).

After he ascends to the time of mincha and has been bound to gevurah, he then waits for night, until tiferes descends to malchus. Thus, he is with Her (Malchus) at the beginning of the night, and binds himself to Her. He then enters the Bais HaKnesses with the intent mentioned above, and binds himself below, as tiferes comes to its place of lodging.

When he exits the Bais HaKnesses, he should actually unite himself with malchus alone, according to the essence of accepting the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom. This should be his daily schedule, corresponding to the cycle of the sefirah, so that he always cleaves to the dominant light (sefirah).