

Morning Mindfulness & Gratitude: *Tiferet*

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Rabbeinu Bachya, Vayikra/Leviticus 2:13 (Spain, 1255-1340)

On the Path of Kabbalah we learn that salt has two shifting forces, one the opposite of the other, and these are Water and Fire. The force of the heat of fire dries and melts water and turns it into salt. If so, there is in the essence of salt both the force of water and fire, which parallel the two elements upon which the world is sustained - which are *rachamim/chesed* (Compassion / infinite kindness) and *din / gevurah* (judgment / boundaries)...

And it is like we say – see that nothing can exist in *din/gevurah*, without partnering with the value of *rachamim/chesed*.

So too, can salt both preserve and destroy, for it preserves meat to last long periods of time and gives flavor to food, but it also destroys, for a place which has been salted cannot grow vegetation...

The Seat of Rachamim, Rabbi Toba Spitzer

Where *rachamim* is expansive and flowing, *din* is strict and harsh. *Din* is the attribute that insists on the distinction between right and wrong, that demands restitution and retribution when a wrong is committed. *Rachamim* is the source of forgiveness, the ability to let go of the need for punishment, the ability to have mercy on those who have done wrong. The rabbis of the Talmudic period understood both *Din* and *Rachamim* to be aspects of Godliness. They were written into the very fabric of creation.

A midrash, about the creation of the world: There was a king who had delicate glass cups. He said to himself, “If I pour hot water into them, they will expand and burst; if I pour cold water into them, they will contract and shatter.” So what did he do? He mixed hot water with cold, and poured it into them, and they did not break. So it was with God. When it came time to create the world, God reflected, “If I create the world with the attribute of *rachamim*, compassion, alone, there will be an overflow of wrongful acts—no one will be afraid of punishment. But if I create the world with *din* alone, how could the world endure? It would shatter from the harsh measure of justice. So I will create it with both justice and compassion, and it will endure.” (Bereshit. Rabbah 12:15, adapted)

Ehyeh: A Kabbalah for Tomorrow, Rabbi Art Green

Divine wisdom also understands that love alone is not the way to bring forth "other" beings and allow them their place. Love unbounded can be so powerful that it overwhelms the other, never allowing it to leave the first embrace and set forth on its own journey... Too much love and the other has no room to exist. Isaac will indeed die because of Abraham's unbounded love. But too much power or judgment is even worse...

Here we have one of the most important moral lessons of Kabbalah. Judgment untempered by love brings about evil; power obsessed with itself turns demonic. Evil is not some distant force. It resides within each of us, as it exists in the cosmos as a whole, the result of an imbalance of inner forces. Neither the world nor the self can do without *gevurah*, represented in the person by self-restraint, strength of character, and the knowledge of how to act appropriately in any given situation. We constantly must ensure, though, that enough love and compassion break through these restraints or else we are in grave danger of harming ourselves and those around us, upsetting the balance of our own inner lives...

“We are accustomed to think that a person’s path of growth is a direct ascent on a vertical line. This, however, is a mistake. Rather, the pattern of growth is more accurately described as the oscillation between two extremes. This can be likened to an electric motor, the movement of which is generated by the constant push and pull of the magnetic force caused by the tension between the positive and negative charges. So, too, spiritual growth is generated through the harmonious movement that results from the interplay of opposing forces that are active in one’s being.”

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, *Michtav M’Eliyahu*, Volume 3, p. 33

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Blessed are you Adonai,
our God, Sovereign of time
and space, Who crowns the
people Israel with a sense
of mission and purpose.

(R’ Jan Uhrbach)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּתִפְאַרָה

*Baruch atah Adonai,
Eloheinu Melekh
ha’olam,
Oteir Yisra’el
b’Tifarah*

* * *

Center of all existence,
help me find the way
to that sacred sanctuary
within myself,
to that precious center of my existence.
Help me to discover
my place in the world –
that space where I truly belong,
that space which belong
unconditionally to me.
Dear God,
I’ve wandered for so very long.
Help me find my way
home.

Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav, *Likutei Moharan* 1:188