

THE SECRET OF THE MANN

RABBI GABRIEL SASSOON. SHIUR 41 02/07/2017 YUD BAIS SHEVAT

On the Tuesday before Parshas Beshalach it is a custom in Klal Yisroel to read Parshas Haman. It is brought down that this is a segula for Parnasa. Rabbi Sassoon explained that it is only a segula if we understand the nature of the mann. Just mere reading the words from the Torah, does not a segula make. One must understand what the mann represented and incorporate that lesson into one's life, for the segula to work.

The Mann came down from shomayim each day and it came to each person exactly the amount he needed for that day. Where it fell, in the distance you would have to walk from your tent was totally dependent on your level of the person's avodas Hashem. For the tsaddik it fell outside his tent, for the rosho, it was further away and he had to walk to get it.

Obviously, we can see from this that the Mann was a lesson in Bitochon and Emuna in Hashem. It didn't matter how much you collected. If you collected more than the amount Hashem wanted you to have, the extra Mann would spoil. The lesson to be learned from the Mann is that Hashem takes care of us. He took care of our needs in the desert and he still takes care of us today through the parnasa we make. Parnassa is the biggest tool we have today to grow in emuna and bitochon.

The Ramchal writes in Shaar HaBitochon that Hishtadlus doesn't really work but we need to do it. Why? Because otherwise the world would run on pure miracles. Now the amount of Hishtadlus can go down, the more the person realizes that everything he has is coming from Hashem. The more we realize that it is not, 'kochi v'ezem odi' it is not due to my hard work, the less we need to work. Just as the Mann fell closer to those who believed more, so too in our day to day lives, our parnasa will come to us depending on our level of emuna.

Those who believe they became wealthy because they are smart, learned etc are wrong. You became wealthy for one reason only-because that was the will of Hashem. We are all put on this earth to express ourselves towards Hashem and Hashem is here to help us do that.

The word 'Mann' comes from the Hebrew word 'Min' which means from. Where did the Mann come from? The Ramban explains that the Mann is a much more spiritual food than regular food. It comes directly from a divine light that became physical through the will of Hashem.

Food is about being nourished and supported. Eating the Mann is about being directly supported by the Divine Presence.

We know that in Olam HaBa there is no eating, drinking, bodily needs. Everyone sits in a circle and enjoys the radiance of the Shechina, the Divine Presence. This sounds like we are speaking about being rewarded for the good we did in this world. The reward is, that in the next world we get to enjoy the Divine Presence which means we get to enjoy Hashem.

When the Torah writes that the Zaddikim in Olam Haba will have a feast of the Levoson-the big fish-it doesn't mean that they will actually eat the fish, rather that they will be feasting on the Divine Presence. So it is not a reward, it is that in Olam Haba we are nourished from the Divine Presence.

But even in this world, we can enjoy the Divine Presence, if we let ourselves see it. This world came from nothing, everything we have has been provided by Hashem and Hashem keeps the world going. In our world, The Divine Presence contracts itself. Everything in this world is a manifestation of the Divine Presence. Our clothing, our homes, our food etc is manifestation of the Divine Presence, but this is less revealing than the Mann and less revealing than in Olam HaBA.

It was easier to see the Divine Presence in the Mann than in our daily lives, but it is here none the less. When we make a brocha on food, we are saying that Hashem is giving us life, that everything exists only because of Hashem. In Olam Haba one is automatically nourished from the Divine Presence, it is a reality in that world.

Because the Mann was a manifestation of the Divine Presence, therefore it could taste like anything the person wanted. It is root of all sustenance and because of that gives us energy.

The question is how do we get to see the Divine Presence in this world. The Ramchal understands that we have to realize that life is about getting closer to Hashem. The Ramchal divides it into 3 different levels.

The first level is the most common level. It is that we do mitzvos in this world and we get rewarded for these mitzvas in the next world. There are 2 different places. This world, Olam Haza is a place where one works, where one faces challenges. This world is just a corridor we need to go through to get to next world. According to this scenario, the place of pleasure is in the next world.

The second level is understanding that the place of enjoyment is in this world. Olam Haza, right here , right now. Really the whole purpose of creation is to enjoy this world, and to enjoy Hashem. The ultimate goal of this world is to get close to Hashem, to be one with Hashem, which means working on one's middos so you can have that pleasure now.

The world becomes a stage for you. Every challenge, good or bad is put there for you to perfect yourself and get closer to Hashem. This is a high level of living. Rabbi Sassoon explained that most people do not live on this level.

On the first level, you do not live with joy, with love but rather you feel you are making sacrifices and you don't feel close to Hashem. Really living this way is being disconnected from Hashem.

To live on the second level, one has to change her idea of what life is all about and how life is structured.

The world olam comes from the Hebrew word, alame-which means Hashem 'is hidden,' but in reality it is we who are hidden from Hashem because the Divine Presence is all over and there is absolutely nothing in this world except for the Divine Presence, "ayin ode milvado.'

The challenges Hashem brings us come to bring us closer. If someone is wealthy-the challenge is what will he do with his money, how much tzedakah will he give, will he cheat to get more money? If someone is struggling with parnasa -how will he handle that challenge? Will he realize that it is all from Hashem

and use the challenge to get closer to Hashem. Every test is here to perfect oneself. Will you grow from the challenge? And if you do grow and get closer to Hashem, that is the ultimate pleasure. If that is one's goal in this world, and it works, then a person can get immense pleasure in this world.

But if one looks further, there is even a third level. In the second level, the world is a place to grow and get close to Hashem. But in reality, we are all a whole world. If we do a mitzva, it is not only that we grow from the mitzvah but the whole world grows from our mitzva. The world is an extension of us, 'We are one with the world.' The reason being that there is nothing in the world besides Hashem. We are all manifestations of Hashem. We all have neshamas. When we realize who we are and that we are one with Hashem, then we can live totally free. Each one of us should realize that we each have our deepest essence -a spark of the infinite contained in each of us. The Ramchal writes that this is so obvious but people forget that everything in this world is Divine Presence.

What sustains us in this world? Only the Divine Presence, there is nothing else. In life, we all face challenges. These challenges are identified with our egos, the small self, living on the first level. Who do we think we are? Most people think they are important. Am I aware of my thoughts? Am I aware of my body? The mind is our ego-who am I really? I am getting insulted by this person. It is my ego getting in the way. Deep down we have to realize we are the Divine Presence-that is our essence-all of us, even the people bothering us. Everything is from Hashem. If we do that, we will feel completely secure because that fact never changes.

But most people separate themselves from the Divine Presence. This is why most people live on the first level.

To Rabbi Sasson, this is all very obvious. He says, it is our consciousness, everything comes down to our awareness, our conscious. Our world is an extension of ourselves and we color our world by how we think of this world.

Hashem's name, Yud Kay vov Kay is a compilation of Hashem's name-the past, presence and future. Hashem is beyond time, beyond space. Divine Presence is the basis of all reality and that is where the Mann comes from. This is the basis of all creation. If one realizes that, one needn't be afraid. You are one with the world. There cannot be anything else in the world besides Hashem. When you identify with this thought, you can be so happy in this world. You need not wait for the next world to enjoy that closeness with Hashem. Your ego is not blocking your vision. You can see that you are infinite.

When we are faced with challenges, we have to realize that we are made up with the Divine Presence, it is our body that is going through this challenge, not our essence. So, if a mother has a 'child in pain-a child at risk'. The mother is an awesome woman, she has the Divine Presence in her. She has a child who needs to improve but it should not in any form make her feel less adequate, less whole. Yes, she wants her child to come back to Yiddishkeit, but does she want it for her child's sake, or because of her ego, is it that she is embarrassed from her son, that she doesn't want her friends to judge her as a mother of a child at risk. We have to let go of these thoughts. If we do, we will feel more expanded, happier, we can deal with our challenge better. We have to let go of our ego and then we will see a new clearer reality. The more one surrenders herself, the more layers you take off and that translates into freedom. You can

go into this world and do anything you want. When you approach life in this way, then you will be successful because only then will you experience life at its fullest.

We are all created differently, with different challenges because we all have different things we need to overcome, different things we need to improve on. We want to experience life in order to give to the world and that is the ultimate existence. Every person has the Divine Presence within them, but each person has a different slice of it and how you express your Divine Presence is unique to you.

What is blocking you? Your identification with your ego.

Olam HaBa is here now. It is how we experience life. Each of us is creating our own Olam HaBa in this world right here and right now. The less physical we are, the more we can experience it right now. Whatever happens in this world, we are completely safe. We are not who we think we are. And incorporating this idea of Divine Presence allows us to live life fully.

Twice in Jewish history the Divine Presence was revealed:

One at Kriyas Yam Suf when even the maid servant saw open miracles and at Har Sinai, everyone received prophecy. You could physically point to the Divine Presence, it was real. The people all saw it. It was a physical thing.

The Torah was given to those Yidden who ate the Mann. Why? Because by getting the Mann every day, they were living with the Divine Presence. They were believers. Each day one had to believe anew that Hashem would feed me today. Each day was a new manifestation of Divine Presence. And this is life. We always have to realize that Hashem is renewing everything for us, each and every day.

Of course, Rabbi Sasson came back to a theme that he speaks about often, 'surrendering to Hashem. 'This is not a one-time thing. It is hard to do but eventually becomes a habit and then one looks at life differently. Our nourishment is the ultimate test of Bitochon and Emuna. The people in the desert were in touch with reality.

Shlomo HaMelech davened that Hashem answer the prayers of the goyim. Give them whatever they want, he asked from Hashem. Otherwise it will cause a chilul Hashem. But a Yid can handle if the answer is 'no' because a Yid does not live with nature. What a Yid gets from Hashem depends on his reality. Nature governs the goyim-they get married, go to work, raise a family. For a Yid it is a different reality. We live in a different space. We are unique, we have Divine Presence in our live. Everything that happens is with Hashem's direct plans for us. Who we marry, where we work, how many children we have, what our children are like is not 'natural'. It is all from Hashem.

The Yidden were brought into this world to reveal the Divine Presence to the goyim. And we see that to be true. The Goyim are always busy with the Jews. The unrelenting anti-semitism. All through the centuries, how many times have the goyim tried to eliminate us. But we are still here. Why? Because we live with a different set of rules. We have our own space.

What was the punishment of the Nachash-the snake, that he would eat the dirt from the earth. Why is that a punishment? He never has to worry about food again. What could be better. But the answer is,

because it shows that Hashem is not dealing with him. Hashem wants nothing to do with him. Hashem does not want to sustain him.

A Yid always has to come back to Hashem. Everyday we have to daven anew for our needs. Our life is determined by our connection to Hashem. The stronger our connections the more beautiful life we can enjoy.

When we read Parshas Haman we have to realize that there is nothing but Hashem in this world. We are infinite, we are part of Hashem. The more we realize is the more fulfilling our lives will be and the happier we will be.