

The Kabbalah of Masculinity & Femininity | Part 3

Source Sheet by Reuven Ibragimov

1. **Job 5:7** אִיּוֹב ה' ז' .א
 (7) For man is born to [do] toil, Just as sparks fly upward. (ז) כִּי־אָדָם לְעֵמָל יוֹלֵד וּבְנֵי־אֶשׁף יִגְבְּיָהוּ עוֹרָו:

This is the depth of the reason why God created a system where man not only earns his own livelihood but can also earn his spiritual bounty through doing mitzvot. By creating a system where we don't feel dependent on handouts, He is allowing us to express our "giving," rather than our "taking," selves. It may seem negative to our relaxation-hungry selves, in reality it is a great gift because it is only through toil, only through earning — and not taking — our sustenance that we can have that glorious feeling of independence.

2. **Tractate Bava Metzia 38a** .ב
 Man would rather have the puny portion he has earned than the bounty a friend gives him
It's not the quantity he is looking for. It's the feeling of being alive, of being independent and full.
This is the depth of the reason why we are told that very righteous people are judged particularly harshly, kechut hasaarah (literally, a hairs breadth — referring to a very exacting kind of judgment)

3. **Bemidbar Rabbah 20:24** .ג
 If the joy of feeling alive comes from feeling that I am full of abundance, then receiving something for nothing kills that joy. Being given a handout turns me into the opposite of the Godlike person I want to be. Righteous people, who spend their life in rigorous "Olympic training to be givers, deserve not to have to suffer the feeling of being given a handout. With the rest of us flawed human beings. God would not be able to give us just what we have earned because most of us would be left figuratively penniless. So He gives us much more than we deserve. There is no choice, even though that leaves us with the danger that we will descend even further into the "it's all about me" mode. But righteous people, who revel in the joy of being Godlike, are granted the privilege of truly earning their keep.

4. **Rabbi Amitai Freuchtvanger** *(These examples are drawn from an as-yet-unpublished manuscript on mashpia and mekabel)* .ד

Western society has perfected the art of taking in a way that looks as if we are giving. "The customer is always right" has little to do with the customer and lots to do with luring him back into our store for our own benefits.

Before we entered the "its all about me" age, we can picture a farmer with an orchard full of juicy, vitamin C-packed Being so full of abundance, the farmers desire was to share that shefa. Of course, he expected to get paid. A giver is entitled to a validation of his shefa2 Money (or barter) is a tangible expression of the value the buyer has for the object.

But our farmer doesn't try to water down the orange juice to get more for his buck. He doesn't try to slowly up the prices so that the customer wont notice. As a giver, he wants to give the real value of what he was paid for. He goes home feeling happy that what he had worked so hard to achieve was appreciated. He takes pride in squeezing the last drop out of the oranges and not the last drop out of his customers; he is happy providing pure value.

The modern-day advertiser, on the other hand, doesn't fill a need, he creates one. He tries to convince the innocent person that he has a need even when he doesn't. He tries to make the product sound better than it is, and then prides himself on getting as much money as possible out of the buyer. Though the advertising slogan may say, "Expect more, pay less," what it really means is "We take more and give less.

Sensing intuitively that giving is Divine and taking expresses our lower selves, we instinctively recoil from this kind of veiled taking.

5. **Proverbs 15:27**

(27) He who pursues ill-gotten gain makes trouble for his household; **He who hates gifts will live.**

משלי ט"ו:כ"ז

ה. (כז) עֵכָר בֵּיתוֹ בּוֹצֵעַ בְּצַע וְשׂוֹנֵא מַתָּנָה יִחְיֶה:

Every time we take, we weaken our ability to give. If giving is the essence of our humanity, then someone looking for gifts, someone who is always trying to get something for free, disassociates himself from his Divine essence. He becomes a taker — and nothing can take him farther away from his tzekm Elokim (Divine Image).

Receiving acknowledges the giver and uses the gift received as an opportunity to give the gift of gratitude to the giver. Oftentimes receiving is giving, and the person who refuses a gift may be a taker. When the lady in the old-age home offers you a necklace she made, when your child prepares you a breakfast tray, when your neighbor offers to drop your child off because she wants a closer relationship with you - accepting any of these may be an act of giving even while outwardly manifesting as an act of taking. A taker sees himself in the center of the universe, with all of the worlds bounty as his inalienable right. When the Sages discuss receiving gifts in such a negative light, they are using "gifts" as a buzz word for only on himself and what he can take.

(Deal with giving too much and becoming a Frier -someone that gives so much that everyone takes advantage of him)

6. **Three Defining Features of the Mashpa (Giver)**

1. **Responsibility:** A real mashpia has a sense of responsibility towards his abundance. Whether what I have to give is musical talent, a nourishing hot soup, or an inspiring thought, this gift is valuable and must not be wasted. Interestingly, people have an intrinsic discomfort with seeing abundance go to waste. Watching the government throw huge quantities of good food into the

sea, for example, in order to keep prices down is upsetting, even when you stand nothing to gain one way or the other. Indeed, a bestower who values what he has to offer won't allow his gifts to be squandered, neither by himself, nor by anyone else.

2. **Focus:** The real mashpia is completely focused on the needs of the mekabel. The receiver and the receiver's needs come first, even at the expense of relinquishing the pleasure of giving. Like rain pouring down onto earth that is hard and dry, abundance that is given just for the pleasure of giving, without focusing on the needs of the receiver, can bring death and destruction instead of life and growth.

3. **Discipline:** A real mashpia, though he yearns to release his shefa, gives only when and what is needed. Though he may want to sing even when the other person is tired, serve the soup though the other is not hungry, tell the inspiring idea in a moment of inspiration even if it's not what the listener needs to hear, the real mashpia focuses on the needs of the receiver, controls his desire to give, and gives only according to the needs of the receiver.

Imagine coming across a poor family whose needs you have the ability to fulfill. If you burst into their hovel one day with cartons and crates of clothing and more food than they have ever seen, you run the risk of overwhelming them. Many are the examples of how this type of giving has destroyed the recipients. For example, you may ruin the balance of the relationship and make them feel uncomfortably beholden to you; they may squander and waste what has been given to them because they aren't used to such abundance; they may lose their drive and initiative and become dependent and needy; and more. The giver, upon hearing about all these risks, might just say, "Forget it. It's too complicated. I just won't give to them!" But a giver bears responsibility for her gifts, and can't just decide not to use them. The giver must exercise self-discipline by giving slowly and according to the needs of the family, and must be completely focused on the needs of the recipients and not on the giver's own desire to just get this over with already. Without these three traits, the giver becomes a taker; instead of the giver being there for the receiver, the receiver is there for the giver. The difference between a giver who gives to give and a giver who gives to take is one word: obligation. A real giver is obligated. He is obligated to his gifts, that they not be wasted. He is obligated to the receiver to give just what the receiver needs, and most of all he is obligated to the One who gave him the gifts to give.

7. **Quick Review.**

1. The Female force is focused on harmony and wholeness, is process oriented rather than result oriented, is receptive and attuned to pleasure.
2. The male force is focused on doing rather than on being, is result oriented, purposeful, is an active bestower, and needs to be disciplined in order to be effective.

