

# The Kabbalah of Women's Exemption from Time-Bound Mitzvos\*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
MASCULINE AND FEMININE <i>SEFIROS</i> .....	2
MITZVOS THAT ARE RELEVANT TO TIME .....	4
THE MAJORITY OF THE MITZVOS .....	5
TIMES OF MASHIACH .....	9
APPENDIX – 248 SINGLES AND 365 DOUBLES .....	11

\*

### Introduction

In the last segment we explored the mystical conception of parallel male-female souls and why women may be exempt from some mitzvos, owing to the fact that her husband fulfills the obligation in her stead. What remains to be understood is why this applies specifically to **time-bound** mitzvos but not to others. An early Kabbalistic work, *Ma'areches HaElokus*, by Rabbi Peretz HaKohen (1304-1370)<sup>1</sup> appears to be the first to address this question. In later years, his ideas were further developed by the Arizal and expanded upon in Chabad Chassidic teachings.<sup>2</sup>

\* המאמר נערך על ידי חברי המכון הרב יעקב שי' גרשון והרב אברהם שי' בערגשטיין.

(1) להעיר מאג"ק (ב, ע' מא): "במענה על שאלתו: הס' מערכת האלקות הוא לר' פרץ הכהן בר' יצחק אחד מגדולי המקובלים בזמן הרמב"ן, והצ"צ בדרוש ג' שיטות (נדפס בסו"ס דרך מצותיך ח"ב) מזכירו כמה פעמים ומשתדל לתרץ כמה מדרושי רבינו הזקן אליב"י. גדולתו מובנת גם מזה שכמה דורות אח"ז התעסק המקובל ר' יודא חיים – שאותו שיבח האריז"ל, כמ"ש בתו"א ד"ה ויאמר כו' הן האדם – בעשית פירוש על ספר מערכת האלקות".

(2) ראה אור התורה (שמות א, ע' שמט) שהפירושים של המערכת והלקו"ת מהאריז"ל עולים בקנה אחד: "ועיין בכס"מ [=בכסא מלך] דקי"ד א', ה'פ"ה השני שהביא זהו כדברי המערכת הנ"ל. והפ"ה הראשון הוא להיפך, דמצוות עשה שהזמן גרמא הם בחסדים המגולים, ואין פ"ה זה נראה, גם הוא היפוך דברי המערכת והלקו"ת מהאריז"ל".



## Masculine and Feminine Sefiros

A basic doctrine of the Kabbalah is that G-d created the world using a spiritual template – the prototypical “image” of G-d, as it were – in whose contours all of creation was formed.<sup>3</sup> This template comprises ten emanations (“sefiros”) or attributes, each of which is interdependent with the other. Within this framework, there are clusters of attributes that make up “spiritual profiles,” or *partzufim*,<sup>4</sup> some of which are masculine, and some feminine.

Because this male-female dynamic exists within the *sefiros*, it therefore exists within all of reality. All creations including mortal man and woman reflect the unique character of the *sefiros* influencing their personality and physical dimensions. Both men and women are created in the image of G-d, but each is a reflection of another aspect of the divine attributes.

The majority of the *sefiros* are emotive, the first of which is *chesed*, kindness. In their primary state of feeling, the emotions per se lack tangible expression, and remain abstract in a state of potential. To give them a voice, the emotions are drawn into, concretized by the final *sefirah* (attribute) of *malchus*. Thus, *Malchus* is referred to as the “mouth”<sup>5</sup> because its function is to *communicate* emotion and thought into verbal expression.

In the supernal *sefiros*, *Malchus* manifests the kindness and wisdom of the Creator and actualizes His Will.<sup>6</sup> “*Malchus has nothing of its own except that which the other Sefiros pour into it*”<sup>7</sup> asserts the Arizal, because *Malchus* is a function that develops and nurtures the potential it is *provided* with, expanding it to be a new, communicable entity.

The desire of G-d to express His sovereignty over the world or share His wisdom and kindness with His creations, is initially experienced in its potential state of divine

3) For more on the notion of being created in “G-d’s image,” See *Machon Shmuel*, [Tzelem Elokim](#)

4) A *partzuf* (pl. *partzufim*) is a *sefirah*, or cluster of *sefiros*, in their mature and developed form – and therefore able to conjoin with other *partzufim*.

5) תיקוני זהר (יז, א): “מלכות פה, תורה שבעל פה קרינן לה.”

6) לקו”ת (פנחס פ, א): “מלכות פה תורה שבעל פה קרינן לה – פ”י כי מלכות לית לה מגרמה כלום. כי היא רק גילוי פנימית רצונו תורה ומצות הם פנימית רצונו.”

7) עץ חיים (שער מב, יג מ”ת): “שהמלכות לית לה מגרמה כלום והיא אספקלריא דלא נהרא.”

