

*Parshanut on Qohelet 10: 4—*

אם רוח המושל: מושל העולם תעלה עליך לדקדק אחריו במדת הדין .

Rashi Qohelet 10: 4

**If the spirit [anger] of the Ruler.** The Ruler of the Universe flares up against you, to scrutinize you with the Divine standard of justice.

ורם לבבך ושכחת את ה' אלהיך: הגאווה סבה להשכיח העיקר, כי מתוך השפע ורבויו השלוה לבו של אדם (קהלת י'ד:) מתגאה ויצר הרע מתגרה בו ועושה כל חפציו עיקר וחפצי שמים טפלים, ועל זה הזכיר שלמה ע"ה אם רוח המושל תעלה עליך מקומך אל תנח, קרא מושל לכה גלגל מאדים שהוא נפש הגלגל לפי שהוא ראש ממשלת כל הצרות והמקרים החולפים בעולם, ויצה"ר הנמשך ממנו קראו רוח כי הוא רוח הטומאה, ויאמר הכתוב כי אם ישיאך היצר הזה ויחפוץ להתגבר עליך לא תאבה לו ולא תשמע אליו להניח חפציו של הקב"ה שהוא מקומו של עולם, זהו מקומך אל תנח.

Rabbeinu Bahya, Deuteronomy 8:14, Qohelet 10:4

**“and your heart will be arrogant and you will forget the Lord your God;”** pride is the principal cause of forgetting essentials. Due to the abundance of affluence, peace, tranquility, etc., a person’s heart becomes haughty, smug, and his evil urge finds it easy to provoke him to follow the dictates of his heart without restraint. When that happens, heaven’s concerns become marginal for him. This is why Solomon felt prompted to say (Qohelet 10,4) **“if the spirit of a ruler flares up against you, do not leave your place, for deference appeases great offenses.”** Solomon referred to the power of the planet Mars as a “ruler,” seeing it is the instigator of all the troubles and unpleasant occurrences on earth; the evil urge derives from that constellation. Solomon calls it רוח, spirit, seeing it personifies the spirit of impurity. The meaning of the whole verse is: “if this spirit of impurity wants to assert itself over you, do not prove agreeable, do not listen to it to put aside the concerns of the Lord in order to follow its call. Do not leave “your place,” seeing God is “the place” of the universe.”

**If the ruler’s mood goes against you, do not leave your place:** One can either persist with a given viewpoint even in a conflict with a more powerful person (Daniel 3: 6). If so, then be ready for constructive criticism and cooperation in the political system, even if it brings you trouble. Or in the case of conflict, first think about how not to lose your social position and opportunistically adapt yourself accordingly to the superior power of the one in power. While remaining calm towards to the irascible ruler may allow one to retain a certain position, a good relationship with the ruler could also be advantageous for the larger collective, as seen with Esther. (Kruger, p. 182). Realizing power through their positions relative to power, Joseph, Daniel and Esther each has a combination of wisdom and opportunism. For each advisor, it takes a unique balance of these skill sets relative to the temperament of the ruler. Take an advisor like John Bolton can advise republican POTUS, praising Ronald Regan and damning Donald Trump. Each scenario demands different advice, even if the party is the same for the ruler’s mood can swiftly turn and lead to different outcomes than expected.