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Naftoli - Seva Ratzon

In the month of Adar, we increase our happiness. Chazal do not clearly spell out what exactly this happiness is. We know that we have a power in our soul to be happy, but what exactly is the kind of happiness we must have during Adar?

There are twelve months of the year, and each month of the year represents one of the twelve *shevatim* (tribes, the sons of Yaakov Avinu). There are different opinions about the month of Adar; according to the Vilna Gaon, Adar represents Zevulun, but according to the Arizal's approach, Adar represents Naftoli. We will go according to the Arizal's approach, that Adar represents the tribe of Naftoli.

Of Naftoli it is written, "*Naftoli, seva ratzon*" (satisfied with his desire). If Naftoli has to do with Adar, then it must be that there is a connection between *seva ratzon* and *sechok*. To know what it is, we must understand something else as well.

The Difference Between *Simcha* and *Sechok*

There are two terms for happiness we find in Chazal – *simcha* and *sechok*. What is essentially the difference between *simcha* and *sechok*?

It is incorrect to say that *sechok* is fake happiness while *simcha* is real happiness. This cannot be, because we know that there is such a thing as holy *sechok*; concerning the future it is written, "*Then our mouths will be filled with laughter.*"

There is holy *simcha*, and there is holy *sechok*.

Simcha is written by Zevulun – "*Rejoice (s'mach), Zevulun, when you go out.*" But by Naftoli the Torah does not write anything about *simcha*; by Naftoli, the Torah writes "*seva ratzon.*" *Seva ratzon*, being satisfied with what one wants, doesn't bring *simcha* – it brings *sechok*.

When does a person have what is called "*simcha*"? "*Simcha*" is the joy of completion, such as "*Simchas*" Torah, when we finish the Torah. We also find that the festival mainly identified with "*simcha*" is *Sukkos*, which is the completion of the Three Festivals. *Simcha* is the joy upon **completion**.

This is why only Zevulun has *simcha* – when Zevulun "goes out" on his travels, he reaches his portion

and he is thus happy.

But *sechok* is something else. This is when a person has *seva ratzon* – when he is happy with his very desire, even before he gets what he wants. When a person has *sechok* – when he laughs – it is because he realizes that there is nothing to be scared about, which makes him laugh.

Usually, only foolish people use *sechok*, and they laugh for evil reasons. How can we make use of the holy kind of *sechok*? We need to have *seva ratzon* – to be content from our very desire. We will explain what this means.

What A Person Truly Wants

By the party of Achashveirosh, everything was according “to each person’s wish”. What Achashveirosh wanted to do was to get everybody to realize what he truly wanted. He was doing this for evil purposes – he wanted to get everyone to truly want the opposite of Hashem’s will.

This evil was fixed by the loving acceptance of the Torah by the Jewish people. By accepting the Torah with love, we showed what we truly wanted, and this rectified the sin of partying by Achashveirosh.

The will of a person has to become revealed. Why is this necessary? Why isn’t it enough to just want the right thing, and why we must we reveal outwardly what we want?

The reason for this is because usually, what we really want is very hidden from us. These are our innermost desires. We don’t know what we really want, so in order to know what we want, we need to reveal it.

Chazal (*Sukkah 52b*) say that “the *yetzer hora* is called *matzpun*, ‘hidden one’, because he hides in the heart of a person.” The depth of this is that the *yetzer hora* hides from a person what he truly wants.

But when a person reaches *seva ratzon*, he reveals what he truly wants. The person clarifies to himself what he really wants in life.

This is not the same thing as *simcha*; *simcha* is to be happy with what one has. *Seva ratzon* is to be satisfied with one’s very desire – with his very *ratzon*! It is to be content, whether one has reached his goal or not.

This is the depth of *sechok* – a person laughs, because he is content no matter what.

Knowing What You Really Want

This is the special kind of Avodah in the month of Adar: to reveal our true desires. Most of the time, we don’t know what we want. The Avodah of this month of Adar, and especially Purim, is meant for us to clarify for ourselves what we really want.

When a person wants to do a *mitzvah* but he wasn’t able to, Chazal say that it is considered as if he did it. The depth behind this is because if a person truly wanted to do the *mitzvah*, he has *seva ratzon* – he really has it, because he is happy with his very desire to do it.

When a person gets what he wanted, that is one kind of happiness; it is *simcha*, the trait we find by Zevulun. But even if a person didn’t get what he wanted, he can still be happy – he is content with this. This is *seva ratzon* – the kind of happiness that is called *sechok*, the trait of Naftoli.

The whole Purim story is a kind of *sechok*. Haman didn't get what he wanted – which made us happy and laugh at him. This was the holy manifestation of *sechok*.

The Higher Kind of *Sechok* - Wanting What Hashem Wants

There are also kinds of *sechok* and *simcha* which are higher than what we have just spoken about.

This is when a person feels content because he knows that this is what Hashem wants. *Sechok* is to be happy just with one's desire; in the higher kind of *sechok*, a person is happy with the fact that it is the will of Hashem that things should be this way.

On Purim, the Jewish people willingly accepted the Torah. They had *seva ratzon* from a deeper kind of will – from the will to do Hashem's will. "*It is our will to do Your will.*"

The higher kind of *simcha* is when a person is happy because the will of Hashem became fulfilled. For example, *simcha* is epitomized by *Simchas Torah*, which is the completion of the Torah reading. There is happiness here because the will of Hashem is being fulfilled.

But with *sechok*, there is happiness even when the will of Hashem isn't fulfilled. It is happiness which comes from the very fact that Hashem has a certain will – even though I have not fulfilled my will, I am happy with whatever Hashem wants.

This is the depth behind why it is prohibited for one "to fill our mouths with laughter (too much) on this world." We must suspect that our laughter is not coming from being on a level of being content with Hashem's will.

In the future – when our mouths will be "filled with laughter" – a perfect kind of *simcha* and *sechok* will be revealed. But in our times, although we cannot reach the perfect happiness of the future, we can still reach some resemblance of this kind of *simcha* and *sechok*.

On Purim, we must have wine. There is no requirement to have a *reviis* of wine, nor is there a requirement to dilute it (unlike Yom Tov). This is because the joy of Purim is a whole different kind of joy than on Yom Tov. It is all about *sechok* – we are content with our very will, even if it's not fulfilled.

When Things Don't Go Our Way

If a person had a true and earnest desire to daven well, but this didn't end up happening – he is able to be happy anyway. This is because a person can say to himself, "Although my will didn't get fulfilled, I am happy with the very fact that I have such a will." This is *seva ratzon* – to be happy just from your very desire.

There are many things which we want to do in our life and they don't get fulfilled. This makes us very frustrated. But really, we should just laugh it off – have *sechok*. Be happy with the fact that you had a will; not everything has to work out your way. This is *sechok*.

The month of Adar and the day of Purim helps us become aware of what we truly want.

We thus need to clarify for ourselves: What do we really want??

If we are clear what we want, we will be able to have *seva ratzon*. Before we can have *seva ratzon*, we need to first figure out what our *ratzon* is – by clarifying to ourselves what we really want.

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