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דע אט שמחתך 009

Purim Wine

The First Simcha Was Between Adam and Chava In Gan Eden

The month of Adar, as is well-known, contains the special power of *simcha* (happiness). The happiness already starts from the beginning of the month – “When Adar enters, we increase our happiness”¹ – and it continues until it reaches its climax, on Purim. The joy of Purim is described in many verses in Megillas Esther²: “*And the city of Shushan was joyous and glad*”; as well as in the verse, “*To the Jews, there was light, gladness, joy, and honor.*” There was “*happiness and gladness to the Jews, festivity and a day of celebration.*”

Let us delve into the root understanding behind the joy of Purim, so that we can arrive at true happiness in our souls, with the help of Hashem.

Where do we find the first mention of *simcha* in the Torah? Who was the first person to rejoice? When we bless the *chosson* and *kallah* during *Sheva Berachos*, one of the blessings is: “Rejoice, beloved friends, as your Creator gladdened you in Gan Eden of old.” We are blessing the *chosson* and *kallah* that just as Hashem rejoiced Adam and Chava in Gan Eden when they got married, so should they reach this level of *simcha*. The first *simcha* mentioned in the Torah was by Adam and Chavah as they rejoiced in Gan Eden, and Hashem Himself, in all His honor and glory, was the One who gladdened them.

Different Expressions of Simcha

The Sages³ list ten different expressions of happiness: *sasson*, *simcha*, *gilah*, *rinah*, *ditzah*, *tzahalah*, *alizah*, *chedvah*, *tiferes*, and *alitzah*. Six of these are mentioned in the blessings we give to the *chosson* and *kallah*: *sasson*, *simcha*, *gilah*, *rinah*, *ditzah* and *chedvah*.

We have already explained at earlier about *sasson* (which is internal happiness) and *simcha* (joy upon completion). Now we will reflect on the other four expressions which we bless the *chosson* and *kallah* with: *gilah*, *rinah*, *ditzah*, and *chedvah*. The words *rinah* and *ditzah* contain the letters *yud* and *hey*, which spells a name of Hashem, while the word *chedvah* has the letters *vuv* and *hey*.

What is the difference between the different expressions of *simcha*?

The word for “man” is Hebrew is *ish*, while woman is *ishah*. The word *ish* contains the letter *yud* and *hey*, while the word *ishah* contains the letters *aleph*, *shin* and *hey*, which spells the words “*ais*h

¹ *Taanis* 29a

² *Esther* 8: 15-17.

³ *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson* 34

Hashem”, the “fire of Hashem.” When man and woman are unified through marriage, the happiness of *gilah*, *rinah* and *ditzah* are created. The letter *yud* of *ish*/man and the letter *hey* of the *ishah*/woman come together and form these three kinds of happiness - *gilah*, *rinah*, and *ditzah*, which all contain both the letters *yud* and *hey*.

If we reflect in the words of *Megillas Esther*, we see that the joy of the Purim miracle was actually brought on by Haman’s plan to annihilate the Jewish people. Haman was the descendant of Amalek – whom the Jewish people have endured much suffering from.

The Sages said that from the time Amalek attacked the Jewish people, the Name of Hashem is incomplete; the letters *yud* and *hey* have been split apart from the other two letters, *vov* and *hey*, in Hashem’s Name – ever since Amalek attacked. The Name of Hashem will be incomplete until Amalek is erased.⁴

As long as Amalek exists, our *simchos* (happy celebrations) are not complete, although it appears that we are making *simchos*. Some *simchos* are like *chedvah*, and some *simchos* are like *gilah*, *rinah* and *ditzah* [but each of these is incomplete, for they each represent only half of Hashem’s Name].

In order to see how *gilah*, *rinah* and *ditzah* differs from *chedvah*, we need to see the contrast between these different kinds of happiness.

Chedvah – Joy Based On Unifying With Others

The word of “one” in Hebrew is *echad*. In Aramaic, one is “*chad*.” The letter *aleph* is taken away from the word *echad*, which spells the Aramaic word for one – “*chad*”. The first two letters of the word *chedvah* – the letters *ches* and *daled* – are related to the word *yachad*, “together”, which connotes unity. When we add on the last two letters of the word *chedvah* – the letters *vov* and *hey* – we have essentially unified the letters *vov* and *hey*. *Chedvah* is thus a concept of unifying that which was used to be apart. It is thus fitting that *chedvah* should be one of the expressions of joy found in the blessing given to the *chosson* and *kallah*, because man and woman, who were previously separated, are now being united through marriage. *Chedvah* takes two separate parts and unifies them into one unit.

We also find by *Chedvah* by Yisro, who rejoiced when he heard about all the miracles of the Jewish people, and he was thus drawn to the Torah; it is written, “*Vayichad Yisro*”⁵, “And Yisro rejoiced” – “*Vayichad*”, from the word “*chedvah*.”

This is the joy of *Chedvah* – when one succeeds in unifying with something that used to be apart from him. Unity causes joy; there is thus joy between newlyweds, for the man and woman used to be apart, and now they have unified.

⁴ *Rashi Shemos 17:16*

⁵ *Shemos 18:9*

Gilah, Rinah and Ditzah – Joy Based On Unity Within

But the other kinds of happiness – *Gilah, Rinah* and *Ditzah* – are a different concept. These are kinds of joy that one attains when he connects to his own self.

Most people are not always happy; why? It because most of us are in a situation of “half a body” – we are split apart inside our own self, and this is due to our many doubts that plague us; our doubts give us no rest, and this makes us disconnected from our own inner self.

Our *sefarim hakedoshim* state, “There is no happiness like the clarification of doubts.”⁶ When a person succeeds in removing his doubts, he attains somewhat of a connection to his inner self, and he feels a certain joyous satisfaction from this. This is called the joy of *gilah, rinah* and *ditzah*.

We have thus seen two kinds of happiness: joy upon connecting with others – such as marriage between man and woman – and the joy of connecting to oneself.

Joy From The Outside Is Superficial

The joy of *chedva* is thus when we unify with something that was apart from us, while the joys of *gilah, rinah* and *ditzah* are when we attain unity within our own soul. Let us reflect: Is most of our happiness coming from within us, or is it coming from something outside of ourselves? Upon a little thinking, we will discover that most of our happiness is coming from externalities, such as: buying a new house, buying a new car, buying a new suit, getting married. Most of our *simcha* is coming to us when we “get” something from the outside.

For this reason, most of our happiness is not complete, because as long as our happiness is coming from something external, it is only temporary. The happiness we are often experiencing is often temporary; the things that are making us happy come and go.

How can we reach complete happiness? It can be reached if we succeed in unifying the parts of our soul together; this will cause us to have an inner joy, and it will lead us to attaining a complete kind of happiness. We will explain what this is.

Most of us have disparity in our soul; we are constantly full of desires that contradict each other. A person has many things he would like to do each day, and the day simply isn’t long enough to fulfill all of these desires. He is left with no choice but to prioritize what he wants the most and give up pursuing some of his desires. We are all full of many *retzonos* (desires), and these *retzonos* are all contradicting each other! We are sensible people who possess *daas* (mature thinking) and therefore we are able to choose what our priorities are. But we are still left with many contradicting desires within us, and this prevents us from attaining any complete happiness.

⁶ *Toras HaOlah*

“When Wine Enters, Secrets Come Out”

If a person succeeds in attaining his inner happiness, he reveals a whole new depth to his soul, as we are about to explain. The words of the Sages are well-known: “When wine enters, secrets come out.”⁷ Wine bears a connection with revealing our innermost secrets. It is also written, “*Wine gladdens the heart of man.*”⁸ Wine bears a connection with happiness. Wine reveals our secrets, and this somehow brings out our happiness. What is the connection between our secrets and our happiness?

We first need to reflect on what this means. When the Sages said that wine reveals secrets, what kind of secrets were they referring to? Were they referring to a secret that our mother told us when we were children, which we never told anyone before, and then on Purim we get intoxicated and then reveal those secrets...? Any sensible person knows that such secrets have nothing to do with the wine of Purim. So what kind of secrets were *Chazal* talking about, that wine can come and reveal?

Chazal were telling us that wine reveals our innermost secrets. They were revealing to us that through wine, we can reveal our innermost secrets – the depths of our soul. What is a secret? If Reuven tells a secret to Shimon and he tells him not to tell anyone, even this isn’t considered a total secret. Theoretically, Reuven can give permission to Shimon to reveal the secret, so the secret isn’t considered to be a total secret. If someone is sitting in his house and daydreaming, nobody else knows what he is thinking. But is that called a secret? If it is, then the whole world is full of secrets...! So this can’t either be the meaning of “secret.”

What is a true kind of secret? A true secret is something that is concealed from a person. A secret is when a person isn’t aware of himself, when he’s not aware of what’s going on deep down inside himself. This is a secret, because the person is living with himself all the time and he thinks that he knows himself, while he really doesn’t know himself at all. *That’s* a secret.

Is there any person who can say that he understands what is going on in the depths of his heart?! Anyone who thinks that he knows himself well is someone who really doesn’t know himself at all! Anyone who has a little bit of self-awareness is well-aware that the soul is full of so much depth, layer within layer – and that more depth to our soul is being revealed with the more and more we live our life. Nobody can say that he really knows what’s going on deep down inside himself.

“When wine enters, secrets come out” – it means that wine can reveal an additional depth to a person about his own soul, things that he was previously unaware of.

The Secrets Which the Wine Reveals

We can now reach a new understanding in this statement of *Chazal*, “When wine enters, secrets come out.” From where are the secrets coming out of from? A superficial understanding is that our

⁷ *Eruvin 65a*

⁸ *Tehillim 104: 15*

secrets are coming out of our mouth; that when a person gets intoxicated, secrets come forth from his mouth. It's clear to all that this is not what *Chazal* mean. According to what we explained above, wine can get our consciousness to become aware of what's going on in our sub-conscious. Wine can serve to reveal our innermost depths of the soul – a depth which we had been previously been unaware of.

“When wine enters, secrets come out.” Our subconscious desires, which used to be a secret to us, can be revealed to us through the wine, and thus, the wine reveals our “secrets.” When our soul becomes revealed to us, this causes us to have an inner happiness.

This is a kind of happiness which is totally different than the regular kind of happiness we are familiar with, which is when we get new things. It is a happiness that takes place internally – inside ourselves – and it is called the joy of *Chedvah*: when our soul unifies with itself.

What takes place when our soul becomes unified within ourselves? Let us reflect about this.

When a person has doubts, these doubts are found within a certain layer of his soul. How can a person solve his doubts? The superficial way to solve doubts is to calmly weigh the options and then decide what to do. If a person can't decide alone, he'll ask someone else for advice.

But there is an inner method a person can use to solve his doubts, and that is when a person reveals a greater depth to his soul. The doubts are then removed automatically. This is the meaning behind how “Wine enters, secrets come out.” The whole reason why we could ever have a “doubt” is because a certain layer of our soul was hidden from us. Through drinking the wine on Purim, we can reveal a deeper layer in our soul which we previously were unaware of – and this removes the source of the doubt.

Understandably, this does not mean that wine creates new depth to our soul. The wine isn't creating anything in us. It is just that through drinking the wine, the resulting intoxication can make us become aware of the more hidden parts of our soul – and this in turn reveals to us new depth about ourselves.

As a simple example, let's say a person is beginning to learn Torah, and he's not sure about which area in Torah he should learn. He narrows it down to two options, but he can't decide. Later on in his life he can gain more understanding about himself, and then he will discover that one of the options isn't the path that is meant for his soul to take.

Another example: as long as a person doesn't know himself well – the nature of his personality – if he's looking for a certain job, he's not sure about what kind of job will work for him. When he gets to know himself better, the doubts become non-existent.

There is a huge difference between these two different solutions to our doubts. The first method is superficial, because when a person decides between two options, he's still bothered by the second option; it is just that he has decided to go with the first option. But with the deeper method – which is when a person discovers new depth to his soul, through attaining greater self-awareness – he has no doubt whatsoever. He sees clearly what the truth is, and he feels inner happiness at this. “There is no happiness like the clarification of doubts.”

The Conscious and the Sub-Conscious

Now that we have explained that wine serves to reveal the innermost depths of the soul to a person, we need to understand: How does this work? How exactly does wine reveal to us what's going on in our soul?

As is well-known, we all have in us abilities that are revealed to us, and we also have abilities which we aren't yet aware of. In more modern language, we have in us a conscious and a sub-conscious. Our Rabbis knew about this before modern psychology discovered this. Reb Yisrael Salanter described our consciousness as our revealed abilities ("*kochos giluyim*"), while our subconscious is described as our unrevealed abilities ("*kochos keihim*").

What is our subconscious – our unrevealed abilities? Reb Yisrael Salanter gave us an example which illustrates the concept. Once there was a *Rosh Yeshiva* who had a son and a student, and to his great pain, his son went astray from being religious. The student, however, remained powerfully connected to his beloved teacher, and was utterly loyal to him. As time went on, the father grew more attached in love with his student than with his son, while he grew more and more estranged from his son, to the point of hatred.

Then, in middle of the night, a fire suddenly broke out in the building where both his son and student slept. The father was woken up in middle of the night and was told that he can save one of them: either his beloved student - or his rebellious son, who has caused him so much grief. Which one of them will he save?

Reb Yisrael Salanter answered: He will instinctively run to save his *son!* All of his anger toward his son gets pushed aside, now that he has to choose between his son and his student. Now, if he would have had time to think about this, he would choose to save his student, who is more precious to him than his son. But when he gets woken up in the middle of the night and there is no time to think, he's acting upon his subconscious. What's going on in his subconscious? Deep down, he loves his son more than the student; it has just been pushed under all this time. When push comes to shove, the inner love for his son gets awakened, and it overpowers the love he has for his student.

Once a student of Rav Dessler *zt"l* came to him and told him that he had a nightmare: he had a dream in which he killed his son. He was terrified at the meaning of the dream and asked how was it possible that he could have such thoughts in his head, when he loved his son very much; did it mean that he really wanted to kill his son?! Rav Dessler told him, "Sometimes, you son cries at night and wakes you up at night. For a few seconds, you are so annoyed at him at waking you up, that you wish he wouldn't exist. That is why you were able to have such a nightmare."

Would the father ever consciously wish he could kill his son? *Chas v'shalom*; of course not. But in a dream, a person is shown what's going on in his subconscious, and he is shown that he has such quickly passing thoughts.

How can a person discover what's going on in his subconscious? It is written, "*On my bed at nights, I sought that which my soul loved.*"⁹ If a person wants to find out what he truly desires deep down in his soul, it is revealed to him "on my bed at nights" – when he's asleep and dreaming. Sometimes a person is shown his subconscious when he's partially asleep, when he's still a bit conscious; and sometimes he is shown his subconscious when he's totally asleep, which is when he's dreaming.

Bringing Our Sub-Conscious Into Our Conscious

It is now upon us to think about the following. If a person is having negative kinds of thoughts that are passing through him quickly throughout the day – subconsciously – what can he do about this? Most people aren't bothered by these negative thoughts. When people get these strange thoughts, they quickly push them aside, and they do not try to figure out what factor triggered those thoughts.

But when a person wants to understand himself well, he is bothered by negative thoughts even if they pass by in his mind very quickly. He begins to learn about what his thoughts are¹⁰, and he realizes that his thoughts are showing him what's going on in his subconscious.

The solution is not to try and push aside the unwanted thoughts; to the contrary, let the thoughts stay, so you can see what's going on in your subconscious [unless they are forbidden thoughts]. After this comes the next step: a person should not be focused on the actual thoughts themselves, but on the information that the thoughts are revealing.

If a person only tries to work on awareness of his thoughts, he will attempt to push aside his negative thoughts, and he won't be able to truly grow and better himself. He's running away from the root of the problem.

The problem is not his negative thoughts; the negative thoughts he's experiencing are merely branches of the problem. The root of the problem is the sub-conscious in him which hasn't yet been purified. So just dismissing the thoughts will not really be solving the problem at its root, but rather avoiding the problem.

The real solution is not to push aside the negative thoughts, but rather, to let them be. See what they are revealing.

This will be a double gain. First of all, one will be able to realize what his weaknesses are, and this will help him more become self-aware to fix them. Secondly, he will be able to notice his qualities which he was previously unaware of, and thus come to utilize his potential.

⁹ *Shir HaShirim 3:1*

¹⁰ *See the author's series Getting To Know Your Thoughts*

The Way to Recognize Your Subconscious Thoughts

Our subconscious is contained in every one of our souls, but they aren't accessed simply through our mind. Like lightning the thoughts coming from our subconscious come to us in quick flashes. Lightning comes where it's dark and cloudy, and then it is gone in a flash; it's gone as quickly as it came. It's impossible to calculate the exact moment that lightning strikes.

This can give us some idea about the thoughts contained in our subconscious. These inner thoughts are called "birds that fly in the sky"; they pass quickly, flying away very fast, like birds. They pass in our head so quickly that often we are unaware of them at all. But the more a person elevates himself spiritually, the more he enters inward, the more he can become aware of his deeds, words and his thoughts.

The way to become aware of our thoughts is by listening within ourselves, which is a subtle kind of listening. When we notice the suddenly passing thoughts, we can then better recognize what's going on in our subconscious.

Our subconscious cannot be reached through trying to think about it; we cannot reach our subconscious, which is hidden, through our conscious mind, which is revealed to us. This is like trying to water a plant from the top of the earth, without taking care of the roots underneath.

Revealing Our Subconscious – Through Getting Intoxicated On Purim

There is another way to reveal our subconscious, and that is through drinking the wine on Purim and thereby becoming intoxicated [in the proper way, as we will soon explain]. The Hebrew words *shechor* (black) and *sheichar* (intoxicating beverage) have the same root letters; the only difference between them is that their letters *ches* and *chof* get switched around. This hints to us that the nighttime, which is blackness, reveals to us the same things which intoxication can reveal to us.

The Sages explain that *Achashveirosh* contains the letters of the word *shechor* (black), because he blackened the eyes of the Jewish people with his decrees. To counter his darkness which he brought upon the Jewish people, we intoxicate ourselves with the holy kind of darkness – the *sheichar*, the intoxicating beverages.

This is the purpose of getting intoxicated on Purim: by getting intoxicated, we are able to become aware of what's going on in the depths of our soul.

How Much Should We Drink On Purim?

In the words of our holy Rabbis, there are differing opinions concerning how intoxicated one should become on Purim. The *halachah* is that "One is obligated to become intoxicated on Purim until he does not know the difference between Blessed is Mordechai and Cursed Is Haman"; one of the Rabbis wrote that it was revealed to him in a dream that one has to get intoxicated only until

that point, but not beyond that. In other words, one should drink on Purim more than he usually does (which is the view of the *Rema*¹¹), but he should not get to the point in which he is so drunk that he doesn't know the difference between Mordechai and Haman.

There is a differing opinion of our Rabbis, which is to get drunk in the simple sense – that one should get so drunk to the point where he does not know the difference between Mordechai and Haman.

This is the argument, but for every argument of our Sages, there is always a rule that “Their words, and their words, are the words of the living G-d.”¹² Therefore, both opinions are correct; let us understand how they both can be true.

As is well-known, most people get to know themselves a lot better when they become intoxicated. The truth is that the whole intention of why we should get intoxicated on Purim is for this very reason: to reveal our inner essence - our pure soul. Since most people are not in touch with their pure essence, we are commanded to intoxicate ourselves on Purim so that our inner purity can burst forth.

The more a person works to purify himself inwardly, the more his intoxication is coming from deep within. Of him, the mitzvah to become intoxicated on Purim is only until he does not know the difference between Mordechai and Haman, for the whole purpose is to reveal outward the beauty and purity of his soul hidden deep within him.

But if a person hasn't worked to purify himself internally, then when he gets intoxicated, much of the garbage that has piled up inside him throughout the year will come pouring out. We often see people on Purim who are rolling around in the street in their drunkenness, spewing forth all their inner emptiness. Of these kinds of people, getting drunk on Purim should only have been **until** *ad d'lo yoda*, but not beyond that point. They should have gotten drunk only **up until** the point of *ad d'lo yoda* and they should not have gone beyond that.

How can a person know if he should only get intoxicated until the point of *ad d'lo yoda*, but not beyond that – or if he is meant to go beyond *lo yoda*? The way to know this is hinted to in the concept we brought before: that *shechor*/blackness and *sheichar*/intoxication have the same root.

Most people, if they would be walking alone at night, in a forest, would be very scared. Darkness, *shechor*, is a power in Creation that causes us to have fear. Since *shechor* is reflected in *sheichar*/intoxication, this kind of person, when he gets intoxicated, will reveal the level he's really on if he were to walk alone through a forest at night...

There are a few exceptional individuals of whom it can be applied the possuk, “*To tell over in the morning of Your kindness, and of Your faith at nights.*”¹³ When someone walks alone through a forest at night, and he still has *emunah* – he is the kind of person who can become completely intoxicated

¹¹ *Orach Chaim* 695:2

¹² *Gittin* 7b

¹³ *Tehillim* 92:3

on Purim yet elevate himself through it. His intoxication will only serve to reveal forth his inner essence, which has become purified through *emunah* – for he completely trusts in Hashem.

Thus, becoming intoxicated reveals what's going in the depths of each person's soul. If someone has worked to purify his soul, getting intoxicated will revealed forth the beauty and holiness of his soul. Such a person reaches the intended purpose of *Chazal* when they enacted that we should become drunk on Purim.

Most people, however, do not reach the intended purpose of getting intoxicated on Purim. When they get drunk, the worst in them is brought out. Getting drunk thus causes most people to lower their self-image in the eyes of others. This resembles a person who places a big sign on himself that advertises all his worst shortcomings, and then he walks all over town with it.

Each person needs to figure out if it's worth it for him to get drunk on Purim. A person has to ask himself: "If I get drunk on Purim, will I behave in the way that *Chazal* intended me to?"

If a person knows himself well and he knows that he has worked more to purify himself internally during the year, then he is able to fulfill *ad d'lo yoda* on Purim. But if a person knows that he will come to improper behavior when he gets to the point of *ad d'lo yoda*, then he must know that for him, getting on Purim totally defeats the purpose of Purim.

The Purpose of Getting Drunk On Purim

Now that we have clarified who should be getting drunk on Purim, we can now explain what indeed we are trying to gain from getting drunk on Purim.

When a person has worked to purify himself internally, there is still more depth to himself that he doesn't know about. When he gets intoxicated, he can discover new depth in himself which he never knew about until now.

Chazal said that "When wine enters, secrets come out." To the degree that one has revealed his soul, greater secrets will be revealed from within, through the wine on Purim. Thus, to someone who has purified himself internally, getting intoxicated through the wine of Purim will bring him a kind of joy that is inner and G-dly. The wine of Purim, for such a person, acts to reveal his inner purity, which he was previously unaware of. The wine of Purim allows such a person to identify with greater and deeper spiritual attainments that he didn't reach until now. Of this we can apply the possuk, "*Wine gladdens the heart of man.*"¹⁴ There is no greater happiness than this, and only an internal kind of person merits it.

When the wine on Purim serves to achieve this holy goal - revealing greater depths to the person about his pure soul - after Purim, the person will feel that he has been elevated spiritually. The ensuing inner happiness he will feel after Purim will burst out of him.

¹⁴ *Tebillim* 104:15

But most people have not worked to purify themselves inwardly. One might look like a very happy person on Purim to those who observe him, but this is only because wine temporarily puts a person in a good mood. We can see clearly that people start out happy on Purim when they're drunk, but then they become depressed; a sort of melancholy comes upon them from getting drunk. There are a lot of people on Purim who cry bitterly when they're drunk.

Where is this sadness coming from? It is really coming from the bitter truth that is being revealed to the person on Purim: he has not yet purified himself internally, and the wine reveals forth all of his deep sadness. He is terribly and profoundly sad deep down, and all of this comes out when he's drunk. He will become sad from this revelation, and so of course, he cries.

Chazal say, "One who sees a *sotah*¹⁵ in her ruination should abstain himself from wine."¹⁶ The deep explanation of this matter is that from the case of *sotah*, we can see how low a level a person can sink to when he's drunk [and to take a lesson from this, one should avoid getting drunk].

Facing Our Fears

According to the above, we can now understand well what the connection that getting drunk on Purim has with the Purim miracle.

When a person is going through a distressful time, how does he react? One kind of person will fall into despair and completely lose hope. As it is written in the Megillah, "*K'asher avadti, avadti*" – "*For I am surely lost.*" But an internal kind of person, when he goes through a time of distress, uses it as an opportunity to summon forth inner strengths which he never knew about before.

If we ask anyone who persevered through an intensely troublesome time in their life: "Did you think you had the strength to survive such an ordeal, before you went through this?" they will often answer in the negative. They were unaware that they possessed such stamina to undergo the hardships they went through, but really, they had the strength all along. It was just hidden deep within. When a person goes through a *tzarah* (a time of distress), he is able to reveal forth his hidden strengths of his soul, which he never knew he possessed.

Every person should reflect and think about the following. If you would know for sure that in two weeks, a decree would go out in your country that all Jews should become annihilated – just as in the times of Haman, who decrees genocide upon the Jewish people – how would we react? Understandably, there would be people who would right away fall into despair, and their first

15 Sotah is a married woman who is convicted of having marital relations with another man; if she has been properly warned by her husband and she is found guilty by two witnesses, she is brought to the Beis HaMikdash, where she must either drink the "Bitter Waters", or confess her crime [whereupon she must get divorced]. If she drinks the water and she had been falsely accused, she is deemed innocent, and she merits blessing and long life. If she was indeed guilty, she dies from the water, in a most horrible fashion. The Sages say that one who observes this must become a Nazirite and abstain from wine. See Tractate Sotah of Talmud Bavli.

16 Berachos 63a

reaction would be to flee to another country. Their reaction would resemble how the Jews in the desert wished to return to Egypt...

But an internal kind of person would face the fear in the right way. He would be able to summon forth new fortification from within himself that he was previously unaware of, and instead of having thoughts of running away from the danger, he would “run away” into a place in his own soul in which no one can harm him. Instead of falling into despair from the danger, he becomes elevated from the situation, revealing forth from within himself great spiritual stamina.

This was what the Jewish people revealed on Purim. Haman decreed that all Jews be annihilated, and *Achashveirosh*, who was the most powerful king in the world then, was ready to carry it out. According to nature, he should have succeeded. It was a situation of utter and palpable fear; each person felt it totally.

But they did not despair, in spite of their predicament. They escaped from the danger into an inner place in their souls, and revealed forth new depth to themselves. They had never known beforehand that they possessed such stamina. When the decree was nullified, they merited to receive the Torah in a whole new way.

The Essence of Our Avodah on Purim

The big secret of Purim is that during the rest of the year, we really do have the strength to uncover new depth about our soul. Most of us do not face physical danger to our lives nowadays. [Of course, sometimes there are anti-Semitic events that take place in our times today which awakens us to feel what it felt like during the times of Haman’s decrees.] On Purim, we are able to return to the inner depth of our souls, which was what the Jewish people revealed during the era of the Purim story. We must try on Purim to reach the level which the Jewish people attained on Purim.

When a person never matures in his spiritual situation, then even when he is seventy years old, he remains at the level he was like when he was seven. He continues to enjoy his childish antics even as he supposedly “matures” through life. Something that truly illustrates what we mean is the following example: We can find people who sincerely believe that Purim is about acting like a little child! Their entire Purim consists of costumes and decorative makeup, in a way most fitting for a child’s playgroup.

But someone who has matured at least a bit about his life – and we do not mean just physically, but that his heart has become more developed to sensing the inwardness in reality – if he is someone who at least searches a little for the truth, he understands clearly that Purim is something deep and profound. He understands that Purim is about revealing new depth to our soul, to reveal from ourselves abilities that we never knew about beforehand.

Every *mitzvah* we have on Purim contains depth to it. There is depth to the *mitzvah* of *Mishloach Manos* and [*Matanos L’Evyonim*]. There is depth to our *mitzvah* of reading the *Megillah*. There is depth to eating the meal of Purim. And there is depth to getting drunk on Purim – a great depth.

If a person wants to really know if he has grown spiritually from Purim, he should discern if he has revealed new depth to his soul as a result of drinking on Purim. He should ask himself: “Am I more self-aware now? Do I know things about myself now which I never knew about before? Or was just in another Purim that came and went, with nothing special about it...?”

One of the ways how we become more self-aware of our soul is through drinking on Purim. But as we cautioned before, getting drunk can backfire. If he is the kind of person who should not be getting drunk, then he will only exude negativity. Understandably, this is not the purpose of Purim.

If *Chazal* would have intended that people should get drunk on Purim in order to release all their negativity outward, then getting drunk on Purim would mean that we have to simply let loose; and then perhaps the person would have to write down how he behaved when he was drunk...

But, we know clearly that *Chazal*'s intention that we should get drunk on Purim was not so that should a person should release his negativity. It is about being more aware of the more inner layers in our soul. That is why *ad d'lo yoda* is only meant for one who has worked to purify and cleanse himself internally

Higher Than The Subconscious: “Above” The Conscious

Now that we have explained at length about our conscious (*kochos giluyim*/revealed abilities) and our sub-conscious (*kochos keihiml* hidden abilities) we can now explain another layer in our soul: the layer of the soul that is **above** our conscious. We will also explain how we reveal it on Purim.

Our conscious is what we aware of, while our subconscious is the part of our self that we aren't aware of. We also are not aware of what lays *above* our conscious. This sounds like the same thing as our subconscious, but we will explain how they are different. What we also need to understand is, if the area above our conscious is clearly above our conscious thoughts, then how can we incorporate anything that's above our consciousness into how we act, since action is on a lower plane than thought?

There is a fundamental difference between the sub-conscious and the above-conscious. Our sub-conscious is the desires in us which we are unaware of. These are things we want, but we aren't aware that we want them; our deeper desires are hidden from us. By contrast, our above-conscious refers to the **higher will** that is implanted in us, which is leading us in how we act.

When we are aware of what we want, these desires are called our conscious. When we want something but we are unaware that we want it, this kind of desire is called a sub-conscious desire. Even if these sub-conscious desires are more powerful than our clearly revealed conscious desires, the deep desires are still considered to be only in our sub-conscious, since we are unaware of these deeper desires. But if we have deep desires which are actively affecting how we act in our life – and these are desires which we are unaware of – these desires are called our “above-conscious” desires.

The “above-conscious” desires are above a person, but they are desires that are actively affecting how a person acts, in spite of the fact that the person is unaware of these desires. We can compare

this to a plane that is on auto-pilot. It seems to the onlooker as if the pilot sitting in the cockpit is the one who is controlling the plane, but the plane is really being controlled by a different person, who is sitting far away in a control station.

Bechirah and Emunah

We will now sharpen the ramifications of this concept. Whenever a person does anything, two forces are active in his soul. One of them is called the power of *bechirah* (free will). The other force is called *emunah* (faith). When a person is acting upon his *bechirah*, his will to act is coming from within himself – whether he is aware of this consciously, or only subconsciously. By contrast, someone acting upon *emunah* is acting from above his conscious – he is being led by his *emunah*, which essentially means that he is being led by the Creator.

Our *bechirah* tells us that we are in charge, for we decide how we will act. We are either aware of this consciously or sub-consciously, but either way, when we use our *bechirah*, we think that we are in charge. By contrast, our above-conscious, our *emunah*, tells us that we are not in control, because there is a Higher Power in charge of us – the Creator.

The above-conscious is called so not just because we are unaware of it, but because it shows us that there are matters which are beyond our control that are guiding us; and their source is the Creator. So our sub-conscious and our above-conscious are the deep parts to our self which are controlling us. Most of our *bechirah* is not being utilized through our conscious state, but through our sub-conscious. When we consciously use our *bechirah*, it is about getting something done, but when it comes to choosing what we want, this *bechirah* is taking place in our sub-conscious. The sub-conscious is the source which is writing our desires into action. Higher than our point of subconscious *bechirah* is our point of above-conscious. This is the higher power in a person which controls and directs a person's life, and it is being provided by the Creator.

Intoxication on Purim Can Reveal Our Emunah

Now we can understand that the concept of “When wine enters, secrets come out” is not just referring to how wine reveals our subconscious into our conscious. Rather, the main purpose of the wine is to reveal the deeper force in us than our subconscious: our point of *above*-consciousness.

In other words, revealing the subconscious is not yet the ultimate level that can be reached on Purim. If a person merits to uncover more depth to his soul, the secret that the wine will reveal from him will be his innermost desire of the soul, the deepest *ratzon* (will) of his being – the will to do Hashem's will.

This revelation that can take place does not just come as an additional piece of knowledge to the person, but as a soul experience. Let us explain this.

If anyone asked whom they believe is running the world, the answer is: “The Creator, Hashem.” But if someone is asked, “But is that how you feel?” then we will get different answers. Not everyone will answer in the affirmative.

The wine of Purim can help a person bring his knowledge about belief in the Creator to become an actual feeling. Through being intoxicated, the wine can transfer the above-conscious into our conscious state – through the means of our sub-conscious. A person will then be able to sense, in a palpable way, Only Hashem runs the world.

Megillas Esther: Revealing The Hidden

As is well-known, “*Megillas Esther*” can mean the revelation (*Megillas*, from the word *giluy*/revelation) of the hidden (*esther*, from the word *hester*/concealed or hidden). *Megillas Esther* reveals the hidden – it revealed matters which had previously been hidden. The word *Megillah* seems to be the total opposite concept of the word *Esther*, because *Megillah* refers to the revealed, while *Esther* refers to the hidden. But *Megillas Esther* shows us that it’s not a contradiction; it reveals what used to be hidden – that whatever was considered hidden until now has now become revealed.

It can be said, as a borrowed terminology, that every person contains in his soul a kind of “*Megillas Esther*.” The hidden parts to our self are our sub-conscious and our above-conscious, and *Megillas Esther* represents our ability to reveal the realm of the sub-conscious and the above-conscious into the realm of our consciousness. Our *bechirah*, which is present in our sub-conscious, is hidden from us; and our *emunah*, which is present above our conscious, is also hidden from us. *Megillas Esther* can show us how we can reveal these hidden parts of our self and bring them into our conscious awareness.

As we go throughout the day living our life, we are experiencing life through our conscious awareness, while we experience our subconscious only sometimes. Most people are not experiencing their above-conscious – their *emunah*. Even though most people will say that they believe in Hashem and that He’s running everything, there are very few people who are living and experiencing their *emunah*.

Megillas Esther is the *megillah*, the revelation, of the hidden. It shows us the hidden parts to our soul – our subconscious and our above-conscious. In the words of our Rabbis, the *Megillas Esther* can reveal to us our subconscious *bechirah*, and it can also reveal to us our *emunah* – our higher will, which is deep down guiding us.

The Meaning Behind Mishloach Manos

Another *mitzvah* that *Chazal* commanded us with in Purim is the *mitzvah* of *mishloach manos*, to send gifts of food to our friends. What does sending gifts to our friends have to do with the miracle of Purim, which is that we were saved from genocide?

As is well-known, the purpose of this *mitzvah*, *mishloach manos*, is to increase love and friendship between our fellow Jews. Simply, we understand that this is accomplished in the best way by finding someone who we don't like, and by giving him *mishloach manos*; and we hope that our enemy will open up the door for us when we show up at his house.

But the depth behind the *mitzvah* is that since our inner essence can become revealed on Purim, our inner love for other Jews will hopefully come with this – and that is why we are commanded to give *mishloach manos* on Purim.

Mishloach Manos must be sent from “man to his friend,” as the Megillah states, which implies that if you think there's someone who you didn't think was your friend yesterday, he's really your friend. This is what Purim reveals – our inherent love with each other. *Mishloach Manos* is not just about giving to our friends; the main point of it is to give to those whom we aren't friendly with, and to discover that they, too, are our friends. Through Purim, we can discover our subconscious which tells us that we have *bechirah* and choose if we will hate others or not. Therefore, if we hate any Jew, it's only because we are *choosing* to, and it's the wrong decision to choose.

If we reach even deeper into ourselves on Purim, we reach our above-conscious, which is deeper than the sub-conscious. Our above-conscious reveals to us a deeper understanding than what we discover in our sub-conscious: that even if someone has hurt you in the past, it's not him who hurt you. He was only a messenger of Hashem, because ultimately, it is Hashem who is in charge. If someone was supposed to get insulted and hurt by someone else, this was decreed on him by Hashem. When someone realizes this, his hatred toward his abuser will melt and eventually disappear.¹⁷

This is the meaning of *Mishloach Manos*, gift-baskets that a “man sends to his friend.” Purim serves to reveal to a person a whole new inner depth, and upon reaching that deep perception, a person can send *Mishloach Manos* to others.

Purim Is Holier Than Yom Kippur

Understanding this, we can now come to appreciate the great spiritual benefit of the day of Purim. The *sefarim hakedoshim* explain that Purim is a holier day than Yom Kippur, because Yom Kippur, because “*Kippur*” can be read “*like Pur*”, a hint to how Yom Kippur is almost as holy as Purim; which implies that Purim is holier than Yom Kippur. What is the connection between Yom Kippur and Purim? They are both special opportunities to attain unity with other Jews. Our sins are not for atoned for on Yom Kippur unless he has been forgiven from any wrongdoing he did to others.¹⁸

¹⁷ For more on how one can work on this perspective of *emunah*, see *Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*, Part 3, Section VI: *Emunah/Faith*.

¹⁸ *Yoma* 85b

Purim is an opportunity to gain even an even higher degree of unity than the good terms with others that we must have on Yom Kippur. When we ask forgiveness from others, even if we are forgiven, there are still some hard feelings. The person who was hurt still feels that he was hurt, just that he has forgiven the one who hurt him. But on Purim, the message of *Mishloach Manos* reveals to us a greater sense of bonding with others: that we are able to feel that no one did any harm to us at all. From that understanding, we strive to give *Mishloach Manos*.

Thus, the mitzvah of reading the Megillas Esther hints to us that on Purim, we can reveal the hidden. The mitzvah of *Mishloach Manos* and the mitzvah of *ad d'lo yoda*, as we explained, are also about revealing the hidden depth in ourselves.

Pre-Packaged Mishloach Manos

Something that has become popular in our times is that people go to the store and buy pre-packaged *Mishloach Manos*; some of them are more expensive than others. For someone's close friends, he buys them an expensive package, and for those who he's not as close with, he buys a cheaper one. There is already a greeting written on the *Mishloach Manos* that comes with the package, and the buyer simply fills in the name and address of where it has to go to, and whom it's from. It is then sent through a delivery man! (What they haven't figured out yet is how to get the deliverer to give it with his heart to the recipient...). In this way, people think that they have fulfilled the mitzvah of *Mishloach Manos* in the most beautiful fashion.

Any sensible person understands that this is not the intended kind of *Mishloach Manos*. When we give *Mishloach Manos* to others, it has to come from an inner place in ourselves, and not in the usual way that we give gifts to our friends during the rest of the year.

Every person should ask himself: "What is motivating me to give *Mishloach Manos*?" Of course, the main reason we are giving is because *Chazal* commanded us to. But if we perform this *mitzvah* mechanically and not from an inner place in ourselves, it's like "a body without a soul". The soul of *Mishloach Manos* is that we need to use it as a tool to reveal a sense of inner unity with other Jews.

If we reflect on what we said before, we can see that Purim is totally different than all other auspicious times of the year. Each Yom Tov serves to reveal a special power of our soul. Purim is not like any other Yom Tov; Purim reveals the very root of our soul, a point that is way above our conscious state.

Revealing The Inner Essence of Purim

What is the root of Purim's essence? Why indeed is Purim such a special time? It is because the Purim miracle that took place during the times of Mordechai and Esther occurred only due to their *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice). The main *mesirus nefesh* was exercised by Queen Esther.

Besides the fact that a Jew gets eternally rewarded for his *mesirus nefesh* in the Next World, there is much more that he gains. Through *mesirus nefesh* for Hashem, a person reveals the depth of his soul – his true, inner self.

It is said in the name of the *Arizal* that the *tzaddikim* throughout the generations who were killed *al kiddush Hashem* (in sanctification of Hashem's Name) did not actually experience any pain when they were being killed! This applies as well to Rabbi Akiva, who was killed by the Roman with iron combs; because he died *al kiddush Hashem*, **he did not feel pain at all, even as he was being killed.** How could such a thing be?? How could they not have felt pain? It is because when a person reaches *mesirus nefesh*, he reaches the inner essence of his soul, and his soul has an entirely different perspective on things. The soul of a person is able to view this situation with such loftiness that the person experiences no physical pain whatsoever.

The *mesirus nefesh* which Mordechai and Esther had enabled them to reach the depth of their own souls. This power is available as well as an accessible spiritual light that shines on every Purim. When a person merits access this spiritual opportunity of Purim, he merits as well to reach the deep revelation his own soul.

When One Cannot Differentiate Between Mordechai and Haman

Concerning our *mitzvah* to become intoxicated on Purim through wine, *Chazal* said: “One is obligated to become intoxicated on Purim *ad d'lo yoda bein arur Haman l'baruch Mordechai* (until he does not know the difference between ‘Cursed is Haman’ and ‘Blessed is Mordechai’).¹⁹ How does a person reach such a level, in which he does not know the difference between how Haman is cursed and Mordechai is blessed? The simple understanding is that a person has to become so drunk that he is totally confused, and then he can't tell the difference between Mordechai and Haman. But what still needs to be understood is: Why do *Chazal* want a person to become so drunk?

As is well-known, the words “*Arur Haman*” and “*Baruch Mordechai*” have the same *gematria* (numerical value in Hebrew); they both equal to be 502. This shows us that when a person becomes so intoxicated that he reaches the innermost point of his soul – **the** place in himself where he feels complete *emunah* in the Creator – he can then reach the understanding that just as Mordechai helped the generation see how everything is in the hands of Hashem, so did *Haman* also serve to accomplish this!

This is the depth to the statement of *Chazal*, “The removal of the ring of *Achashveirosh* [to allow Haman's decree] was greater than all the [accomplishments] of all 48 prophets and 7 prophetesses who prophesized for the Jewish people. All of the prophecies did not cause them to repent, while *Achashveirosh* caused them to repent.”²⁰

¹⁹ *Megillah 7b*

²⁰ *Megillah 14a*

Of course, this does not mean to imply that the wickedness of Haman is to be equated with the pure goodness of Mordechai. Haman was able to move us to do *teshuvah*, even more than our leaders and *tzaddikim* tried to do. (Our enemy Pharaoh is praised in a similar way.)²¹

When a person understands simply that Mordechai and Haman are different, because Haman is cursed and Mordechai is blessed, then it shows that he's only in his conscious state. When a person becomes intoxicated and he reaches *lo yoda bein Arur Haman L'Baruch Mordechai*, he has reached his subconscious. He realizes that Hashem is in charge of everything, and therefore he is able to realize how even Haman's decree of genocide was constructive for the Jewish people. Ultimately, the decree is what moved us to *teshuvah* and thus be saved.

Balancing Efforts With Emunah

Chazal state that when Haman argued with *Achashveirosh* to issue the decree against the Jewish people, Hashem swore and said: "Because of you, two days of celebration will come to the Jewish people."²² What is the depth behind this matter that Purim came to us in Haman's 'merit'?

On Pesach, we drink four cups of wine; there is a specific amount of how much we drink. But on Purim, there is no set amount to drink – the amount is *ad d'lo yoda*. We drink more on Purim than in any other time of the year. The purpose of drinking on Purim, as we said, is to reveal our **above-**consciousness. If we go over to a person when he's completely drunk – he's above his consciousness – and we ask him if he is grateful to Haman, he might answer "Yes". (Now, if he would say that he is grateful to Haman when he's not drunk and he's totally conscious, *then* we would assume he is drunk...)

So although we can reach very high levels through getting intoxicated on Purim, reaching our *emunah* in Hashem, still, we cannot live on this plateau during the rest of the year. If someone tries to live on this level all the time, he will become disillusioned, thinking that it is wrong to go to work for a living. He won't be able to lead his life properly.

The point of the above-consciousness must only be accessed at times, and one cannot live in it all the time. It is like our general *avodah* of *rotzoh v'shov* ("running and returning" in our spirituality); our inner and external worlds need to always be integrated. When we use our inner world, we have the perspective of *emunah*, which shows us that Hashem is running everything; and from the viewpoint of external reality, we choose how we will act and we take responsibility. We are aware of ourselves and we worry for ourselves.

We need to balance these two views – the viewpoint of our inner reality, *emunah*, and the viewpoint from our external reality, our various efforts, choices, and responsibilities that we have. The balance between these two viewpoints is a very subtle thing to accomplish. We have to keep balancing between two opposing viewpoints – our *emunah*, and our *hishtadlus*/efforts.

²¹ *Shemos Rabbah* 21

²² *Yalkut Shimeoni Esther* 1054

Understandably, it is impossible to say how exactly we balance our life with both *emunah* and *hishtadlus*. Balance requires inner understanding from our part. There are some people who take *emunah* to an extreme, and they don't make *hishtadlus* enough. Others are too drawn after *hishtadlus* and they are seriously lacking in their *emunah*. Both of these people are imbalanced. We all need to be balanced. There are certain times in which we need to use *emunah*, and there are times in which we need to focus on *hishtadlus*, and it also depends on each person's unique situation.

Summary of Our Goal on Purim

To make these matters practical, we will now provide a brief summary of what we've explained. The purpose of Purim is to reveal clearly our consciousness, our sub-conscious, and our above-conscious. To be clearer, on Purim we can become aware of how we want to act, as well as what we really want deep down – and ultimately, of Who is leading us [the Creator].

If a person reveals these aspects in himself over Purim, besides for the external joy of *chedvah* that he reaches, he also merits to express the inner joys known as *gilah*, *rinah* and *ditzah*.

In order to reach true *Simchas Purim*, it is not enough to have superficial joy. We need to reveal inner happiness in ourselves, the happiness which was there along – just that we never about it before.

After Purim, if a person feels that he now knows himself better than how he did before Purim, then he has truly merited the “*days of celebrations, joy and festivity*” of Purim. If he did not merit this, then his Purim has gone by like any other regular day of the year.

May Hashem merit all of us to rejoice together with true and complete happiness; that our consciousness (revealed aspects of our self) subconscious (hidden aspects of our self), and above-consciousness (our inner *emunah*) should all be perfected. And then, all of the Jewish people will merit to rejoice, together, with a complete heart.