



BILVAVI ADAR ALEPH

Avodah | Increasing Happiness
Essence | Is Laughter
Mazal | Fish
Tribe | Zevulin

Collection of Drashas from the
Author of Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh

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ADAR ALEPH – INCREASING HAPPINESS

The Month of Adar – A Time of Happiness

We are now in the month of Adar, with the help of Hashem. (In a leap year, we merit to have two months of Adar). It is a well-known fact which power is revealed during the month of Adar: it is the month where there is more *simchah*/happiness. The Sages state, “When Adar enters, we increase happiness.”¹ To be more specific, the power which describes the month of Adar is known as *sechok*/laughter.²

Let us reflect, with *siyata d’shmaya*, on what the roots of sadness are, so that we can learn how to remove sadness and reveal happiness in our life.

Reflecting On the Roots of Sadness

In whatever we think about, we can always discover details and roots. Either we can see the details involved in a matter, or we can see the roots of the matter. Therefore when it comes to analyzing sadness, either we can contemplate on the many different details that cause it, or we can look into the roots and see what brings one to that emotion.

Here we will try to analyze the roots that cause sadness, as opposed to studying the many ‘branches’ that can bring it on. There are several “root” causes for sadness.

Two Sources of Sadness – In the Body and In the Soul

Man is comprised of four physical elements: fire, wind, water and earth. These four elements are in all of Creation as well as in man. Earth is the heaviest of the elements. When it is left unbalanced by the other elements, the element of earth will weigh one down, which will ultimately cause one to feel sadness.

Thus, sadness can stem from the heaviness that is found in our physical body. Our body was fashioned from the earth. Man comes from dirt. When one’s element of earth is imbalanced, this heaviness can breed sadness. This is the first source for sadness: the element of earth contained in the physical body.

1 Talmud Bavli Taanis 29a

2 Sefer Yetzirah 5:5 [see Rosh Chodesh Avodah_013_The Power of Laughter, for how to use the power of sechok/laughter in the month of Adar].

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When one commits a sin (Heaven forbid), and certainly if one commits more than one, one's soul becomes sad because it does not want to be in a situation of sin. When a person sins and does not immediately do *teshuvah*,³ the soul becomes sad.

Solving Sadness Due To Heaviness

As we discussed in the month of Shevat, generally speaking, one should focus on eating a healthier diet. Our body becomes heavy from the “earth” within us, so we need to be careful what we put in it. When we overeat, this makes us feel heavy - heaviness causes us to be sad, since heaviness is a trait of earth, the root element for sadness. Therefore, we should become accustomed to eating foods that will not make us feel heavy.⁴

In addition, when someone is extremely drawn towards lethargy, he needs to start doing things enthusiastically. This will combat the nature of the ‘heaviness’ within him that is causing him to feel sad. He should work on this by practicing doing things energetically. For example, he could resolve upon himself that for three times a day, he will do something quickly and with enthusiasm.⁵

This is the two-part solution that resolves the sadness that comes from feeling physically lethargic and sluggish. The first part of the solution is to get used to a healthier diet. The second part of the solution is to try to do three things a day with enthusiasm. This will enable one to acquire the trait that is described in the *Mishnah* in *Avos*, “as light as an eagle”, and to avoid the lethargy and sadness that is produced from the ‘heaviness’ in the body.

Solving Sadness of our Soul

The second source for sadness that we mentioned is when sadness comes from the soul. The soul becomes sad when a person commits sins. The solution for this kind of sadness is to do earnest *teshuvah* from the depths of one's heart.

Our Sages wrote that there are four main times to do *teshuvah*: before going to sleep at night, on Erev Shabbos, on Erev Rosh Chodesh and on Erev Yom Kippur - which is the most important time to do *teshuvah*. These are the “general” times to do *teshuvah*, but if a person lives a more inner way of life, he does *teshuvah* whenever he feels sadness coming from his soul, and he does so from the depths of his heart.

The *teshuvah* should not be done monotonously, but truthfully and earnestly, until one feels that one's *teshuvah* is genuine, to the point that “The One who knows all secrets (Hashem) can testify on him that his *teshuvah* is truthful.”⁶

3 repentance

4 This was discussed in the shiur of Rosh Chodesh Avodah_011_Elevated Eating; see also Fixing Your Earth_010_Counteracting Laziness

5 Editor's Note: It is said about Reb Yeruchem Levovitz zt"l that he would practice doing things against his will 5 times a day, in order to counter the nature of laziness (and another note, the Rav explained this in terms of getting used to bittul haratzon (nullifying one's will). Perhaps the reason for the Rav's recommendation of doing this 3 times a day, as opposed to 5 times a day as Reb Yeruchem did, is so that even simpler people (like us), who are not on the level of Reb Yeruchem Levovitz, can also practice it.

6 A quote from the Ramban

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This is an internal way of living, wherein one trains oneself to react immediately when one feels an inner sadness by concentrating deeply and resolving to live as a more sincere Jew: to resolve that one will truly submit oneself to the *Ribono Shel Olam*.⁷

If one does *teshuvah* earnestly, one will find that one's sadness will subside, either totally, or at least to a very large extent.

Identifying Your Sadness

From the two above possible reasons for feeling sad – feeling a physical heaviness of the body, or feeling sad due to a sin - one should try to identify which sadness it is as one is feeling it.

If one feels a sense of 'heaviness' in one's body, if one is feeling somewhat sluggish and lethargic, then this stems from the body's element of earth. The solution for this kind of sadness as we said is to get used to a healthier diet as well as to do things enthusiastically. But often one will feel that the reason for this sadness is deeper than just a general sense of feeling lethargic. Such sadness is not stemming from a heaviness of the body, but from a deeper source. It is coming from the depths of the *neshamah*/the soul, due to sins, which feel painful to the soul. When that is the case, the solution is to do earnest *teshuvah*.

If one reflects and has become a more internal kind of person, one will be able to keenly identify if the sadness one is feeling is coming from a heaviness of the body (the element of earth in the body), or if it's coming from sins. And after identifying which kind of sadness it is, one should use the solutions above, accordingly.

We have so far mentioned two root causes for sadness, how they can be rectified, and how one should go about identifying them.

A Third Cause for Sadness: Lacking a Sense of Purpose in Life

Until now we have explained, with *siyata d'shmaya*, two kinds of sadness - a sadness that comes from a feeling of 'heaviness' in the body, which is rooted in the body's element of earth; and a sadness that comes from the soul, due to sins and improper actions. Now we will speak about a third kind of sadness, which is very common. This is when one is living without any sense of direction, when one doesn't know what one wants from oneself nor what one's purpose in life is.

Many times, when one experiences failures in the external aspects of life, or when one has time to think quietly about one's personal situation, one will discover that one has no clear-cut direction in life. When a person is living without a sense of clear direction in his life, he is filled with all kinds of doubts about what to do and what not to do. In a broader sense, he is filled with doubt about his entire life. This is the most common example of sadness. The world is full of this kind of sadness.

We have so far given a general description of it. Now let's explore this deeper so that we can have a clearer understanding.

There is a well-known statement, written by the Rema, who says, "There is no happiness like the clarification of doubts."⁸ These words imply that when there are no doubts, there is

⁷ Master of the world

⁸ Toras HaOlah

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happiness. Thus there will be sadness whenever a person has doubts. When one is trying to make a decision but is filled with doubt, the soul becomes sad.

(A hint to this is that the Hebrew word for sadness, which is *atzvus* (עצבות) is from the word *עצב* (*etzev*), which is from the words *עץ ב'*, which hints to the term “two options of advice (because the word *עץ* is also from the word *עצה*, advice) – in other words, when a person faces two conflicting paths of advice to take, he has *atzvus*/sadness.)

Sometimes a person is sad due to a particular doubt about something that he is going through. For example, if he isn't sure whom to marry, if he doesn't know which house to buy, where to live, or if he's not sure what kind of job he needs to take. In these cases, one knows clearly the doubt that is plaguing his happiness. But in many cases, one cannot name a particular doubt which is bothering one. He is just feeling doubtful about his entire life and which direction it is taking. This makes him feel a general lack of clarity in his life. These are the kinds of doubts that fill the lives of many people resulting in the world being full of this kind of sadness.

Lack of Centeredness

If we ask any believing Jew, “What are you living for?” he will surely answer that he is living in order to fulfill the will of Hashem and to fulfill the *mitzvos*. However, if we would look deeper into what's going on inside most people, we would discover that they - while certainly saying that this is what they live for, and that they know in their minds what they must do - are not directed towards any one point. Their souls are scattered over many different situations that they are involved with. When the soul is so spread out and is not aiming towards any one point in particular, this lack of direction towards anything clear, results in a deep sadness to the soul.

We see that there are many people who are working towards a goal. Sometimes they have materialistic goals, and sometimes they have spiritual goals, but in either case, they are striving towards one point. They are centered and focused on attaining a particular goal that they have which generally keeps them from falling into the pit of sadness.

Based upon this observation, we can uncover the solution for the deep sadness that fills most of the world – a sadness that stems from the lack of clarity and direction in life – by learning how to stay focused on a particular goal. The goal that we want to develop, however, will be of a spiritual nature, and not of a materialistic one. Yet, we can still learn a lesson from the materialistic goal-oriented people of the world and can use their method of success, when it comes to our own spiritual potential. With the help of Hashem, we will explain this.

Having a Spiritual Goal

There are many observant Jews who learn a profession, whether it is to become a doctor, lawyer, or whatever profession they choose. They are juggling many different aspects in their life, yet they are focused on attaining a certain goal. By going to school to study, this helps them stay centered as they aim for that goal. The mere fact that they are working towards a goal gives them a sense of happiness, whether the goal is a worthy one or not.

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Just as actively striving towards a particular goal can be a means for success in the material world, so too it can work when we have a spiritual goal to strive for. There are some people who actively pursue spiritual goals from which they gain satisfaction and happiness.

For example, there are people who feel that doing *chessed* for others is their spiritual goal in life. They open up a *gemach*/an organization that helps people, and are focused solely on this one goal. Some people help by giving/loaning money, some help by offering their advice and some people help others by lending their possessions. There are many ways in which to help others. In all of these scenarios, the person is focused on a spiritual goal of *chessed*.

Whether the goal is materialistic or spiritual, as long as one can stay focused and concentrate on pursuing this goal, one's soul will feel connected to something. He will be less prone to sadness, and will find it easier to be happy.

Most people are actively doing many good and wonderful things, but they are not striving for any one goal in particular. For example, if a woman is a housewife, she does many good things every day; she takes care of the house, she is constantly nourishing her husband and children with food - each of these acts involves countless achievements. In addition, a woman does many other constructive acts yet this doesn't necessarily make her happy, even though she is doing all of these good things.

Why? It is because she doesn't see how it all connects. She may feel very 'spread out' all over the place with all of these things that she does. She would be very happy if she would just consider how all of these acts really connect into one piece. If she considers *chessed* to be her goal, then she would derive happiness from this. But when a woman doesn't consider all of what she does as part of a general goal that she is striving for, then in spite of all her many actual achievements, she will not be happy.

Every Jew, man and woman alike, needs to aim for a spiritual goal in their life. No matter how many countless wonderful acts a person is doing each day, one will not actually be happy from all of this unless there is a particular spiritual goal that he/she is striving for.

Each person can have a unique goal to strive for; it is not the same for everyone.

Figuring Out Your Personal Spiritual Goal in Life

In the secular values of the material world, people seek wealth, status, and nice houses to live in -that is what drives them to stay focused on their goals. But when we speak about the inner, spiritual world, the focus must be on a spiritual goal, on a certain inner point which we aim towards, as we go about our day-to-day living.

Every person will have to sit alone in a quiet place and try to figure out, as best as he can, a spiritual goal that will speak to him and which he feels is attainable. One needs to think: "What is a worthy, spiritual goal that I would want to aim for and direct my whole life towards?" The point is to be focused on utilizing one's own potential, which lies dormant within you.

Once again, let us emphasize that there is a difference between how the secular world pursues their goals as to how a Torah Jew needs to pursue his goals. When a gentile speaks of having goals in life and on being focused and concentrated on working towards a goal, the attitude is to lay down the desire that you really want and how to get to what you want the most; how to attain that which you want badly. But when we speak of spiritual goals, the goals that a Torah Jew needs to have, which utilize the potential of our *neshamah*/Divine soul, the way of knowing our goals is a different process.

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It is about how to actualize the potential that is within me, as opposed to getting what I want out of life. It is about figuring out which point speaks to me and is close to home, as opposed to something that my *nefesh habehaimis*/external, animalistic layer of the soul wants, which is expressed in the gentile world. It is a clarification about the innermost point that I currently identify with. It is that point which a Jew needs to strive for and to figure out how to realize this potential.

If one succeeds in uncovering the spiritual point that speaks to one the most at one's current level, one is engaged in utilizing his potential, and one will succeed in removing the deep sadness of the soul, the pain of the soul where there is a lack of clarity and direction in life.

However, it is not an easy feat to figure out what the goal is - it will definitely not just take a few minutes. One needs to sit alone, quietly and delve deep so as to clearly recognize oneself, until one can see what one's deepest spiritual ambition is. Often we will need to speak to someone else for help with this.

One will also need to *daven* to Hashem for help so that one should merit to discover a spiritual goal that can be aimed for. If we can cry to Hashem for this, we should do so. But even more so, we must understand that we will not get to it immediately. But at one's own current level, one can try to figure out a spiritual goal that speaks very clearly to oneself, and to aim towards it in one's day-to-day life.

Slowly as time goes on, one will gradually be able to uncover an even deeper spiritual goal and then direct oneself accordingly so as to actualize that goal.

The Prerequisite to Happiness

We need to understand the following point, which is a prerequisite to *simchah*/happiness. It is the very root of the solution and an essential point to be aware of: *simchah* is not just based on that which I want to attain but have not as yet attained, it is primarily based on whatever I have attained thus far.

If one is not focused on any one goal in particular, one will not be clear as to what one wants to achieve - neither will one be clear of what one has already achieved.

These two points are unclear when one does not have a goal. Upon having a goal, we first need to clarify what we want to attain. At the same time, we must also be aware of what we have already attained. We need to always remind ourselves of this: to be clear in what we want to reach, and to be clear in what we have so far gained. That which you have already attained is actually the root of your *simchah*, and that which you are aiming for, which you haven't yet achieved, is the factor that takes away sadness.

Thus, *simchah* is comprised of two factors: the removal of our sadness, and the revelation of happiness itself. Anything you have attained thus far is included in your aspect of "*someach b'chelko*", "being happy with one's lot" (which is the revelation of happiness). Anything which you have not as yet achieved but which you are aiming towards, takes away sadness.

Let's review this again so that we are clear about it: there are two parts to *simchah* – the removal of sadness, and the revelation of happiness. When I am focused on attaining a certain goal, this removes my current sadness [because the soul will feel like it is moving forwards]; to be more specific, it removes the doubts that create sadness. And where do I derive *simchah* from in the present? From that which I have attained thus far; this is the "*someiach b'chelko*" that reveals happiness in one's present state.

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Now we can understand the following. We mentioned earlier the difference between the gentile and the Torah approaches of being goal-oriented. The way of the gentiles, which is especially the case in our current generation, focuses on what you should want out of life, and how to get it. It is about “getting what you want”. When you get it, you are happy, because that was what you wanted, you aimed for it, and you got it. That is Western mentality. By contrast, the Torah has a different approach to being goal-oriented: it is about actualizing the “I”. For we need to wonder: What is the “I” in us that wants things?

If “being happy with my lot” means that I got what I wanted, that would mean that I partially have what I want and partially I don’t. There is a rule, “He who wants a hundred, will want two hundred.” We are never completely satisfied when we attain what we want, because the next day we will want something else, and then we are back to where we started. There is no “lot” to be happy with here.

But if I tried to reach something which my “I” wanted – if it came from a very deep inner drive – then when I do attain that which I want, it is not simply that I have received what I wanted, but that it is a part of my very “I”, something that is a part of me. The resulting happiness is coming from the actualization of the “I” – the happiness that comes when one utilizes one’s potential.

We need to understand this clear, deep point. When a person wants something, and attains it either partially or completely, the happiness that results from this is just superficial; it is an incomplete happiness. The happiness will be fleeting, and sadness will soon follow.

The only genuine happiness which exists is not when I simply attain what I want, but when I reveal my “I”; when I actualize the potential of my “I”. That is *simchah*. For if something is not a part of me and it is only external, reaching it will not give me true and inner *simchah*, even if it is a wonderful thing to attain; whether it is a physical attainment, or a spiritual one. By contrast, if I achieve something that is small but it actualized my “I” in the process of getting there, then the happiness I will experience is coming from my “I”. You can only have real *simchah* in something that is a part of your “I.”

The meaning of *someiach b’chelko*/being happy with one’s lot, means that even if my “lot” is small - like when I compare myself with others and I see that others have more than me - I can still be *someiach b’chelko*.

How indeed can one be happy if one sees that others have achieved more? The depth of this is because *simchah* does not come from what I acquire. If it would come from what I acquire, then I can never be happy, because in comparison to others, I may have acquired very little. *Simchah* comes from actualizing the potential of my “I.” When my “I” is actualized, when I have reached something which is “me”, there is resulting *simchah*.

For this reason, if a person does not have true self-recognition, he will not be aware of any actualization of his potential, and will find nothing to be happy about. When he reads these words, he will not be satisfied, and he will feel, “In the end of the day, I don’t have much to be happy about. Even the things I do have in my life are minimal compared to what others have. Others have much more than I have to be happy about. So how can I be happy with what I have, when I see that everyone else has more than me both physically and spiritually...?”

When one finds it impossible to be happy with what one has, it can only be because one is out of touch with one’s “I”. One is unaware that the only thing which truly gives us happiness is when one utilizes his personal potential. If he would be aware of his “I” and he would be aware that only actualizing his potential is what provides happiness, he would have a whole different

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perspective towards life, and he would not need answers because he would be above this question.

When one lives superficially, one will remain with the question resulting in a lot of pain. We will not be able to be happy with what we have. But when a person comes out of superficiality and realizes that happiness does not come from acquiring things, but from actualizing the “I”, he will feel that everything he attains is a part of his “I”, and the *simchah* that he experiences will be a happiness in his very “I” as it is.

We are speaking about a totally different perspective of *simchah* here! It is not a *simchah* that comes from getting what you want, where you remain dissatisfied by the things you have not as yet achieved -it is a *simchah* that one has in one’s very “I”.

It is difficult to explain it any more than how it has been explained here, but herein lays an entirely different and deeper perspective of *simchah*.

Summary

In summary, we have explained three main underlying reasons for sadness.

The first source of sadness comes from our body, when we have a feeling of ‘heaviness’ that dominates us and makes us lethargic. This can be counteracted with watching what we eat, together with doing things enthusiastically each day.

A second source of sadness comes from our soul, when there are sins that we have not as yet done *teshuvah* for. The solution for this is to train oneself to doing *teshuvah* on a regular basis, from the depths of the heart. A person should awaken himself to *teshuvah* for every time that he feels a deep and inner sadness.

The third cause of sadness, which is the most common kind of sadness that people have, is when people do not feel fulfilled in their lives, and lack a sense of direction. The solution for this is two-fold: to realize what we have already gained so far in our life, as well as to be focused on a certain spiritual goal that speaks to us. Unfortunately, most people in the world are suffering in their souls from this kind of sadness – they feel like they are not aiming for any particular goal in life.

In Conclusion

All that we have explained here until now, understandably, is only the introduction for one to get to the complete and true *simchah*, which is described in the verse, 'שמחו צדיקים בה' - “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem.*” We did not discuss this kind of *simchah*, but that is the desired goal of all that has been explained here.

May we merit from Hashem to feel true happiness in our life - by being happy with even the parts of ourselves that we have not as yet actualized, as well as by being happy with the parts of ourselves that we have actualized; and that all of us together should rejoice in the Creator – as it is written, “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem.*”

Questions & Answers with the Rav

Q1: Does this idea (of being focused and connected to one spiritual goal in our life) also apply to other areas in life, such as marital peace, children, and livelihood, and other areas of our life?

A: This question stems from living a superficial kind of life, where a person is experiencing life from outside of himself/herself, and not from the inside. When a person lives inwardly, all of these aspects mentioned (marital peace, children, livelihood) are placed in secondary focus to the main point that he is directed towards. When one is not directed towards any one inner point in his life, he will go through the motions, and sometimes his focus will be on his marriage, sometimes on his source of livelihood, and sometimes on his children. But when there is one inner point that he is directing himself towards, none of these things will take over his focus, because he is heading towards a larger picture than any of these aspects.

Q2: Can the Rav give me specific questions that I can ask myself in order to get clarity in what my main point is that I should be focused on in life?

A: This is a very fundamental question to ask, which is hard to answer in a brief amount of time. To put it forth in general terms, every person needs to know: (1) The strongest positive quality that he possesses, (2) and after that, he should know what the “deepest” thing is that he experiences in his soul. (3) After a person knows both of these factors and he has the combined knowledge of both of these factors together, he should then reach a third stage: the deepest part of himself that he curren

However, this is really a very big question, and it is like the request of the person in the *Mishnah* [in the times of Hilel and Shamai] who asked, “Teach me the entire Torah on one foot.”

Q3: How does this idea of ‘figuring out our main point’ fit into our general goal of life, which is to learn Torah and do mitzvos? Are there really two goals in life – our personal goals, and then our general goal in life (which is Torah and mitzvos)? How do we integrate the goal of keeping Torah and mitzvos with having my own personal spiritual goal?

A: Torah and mitzvos are the purpose and goal that applies to all of *Klal Yisrael*, and in that aspect, all of our goals are equal. But within our general goal of Torah and mitzvos, there is also the individual and private goal that each Jew must strive for. The Sages say that everyone is different and that everyone thinks differently (Berachos 57a). Each person contains a point which no one else has. The private goal of each Jew is not meant, *chas v’shalom*, to take away from the general goal, which is keeping Torah and mitzvos. Rather, each of us needs to bring out our individual point and fulfill our own private and unique mission.

Our personal goals in life are not to be viewed as a ‘separate’ goal that we have other than Torah and mitzvos; rather, our personal goals in life are a goal within our general goal, which is Torah and mitzvos, which enables us to have a connection with Hashem. The individual mission of a Jew is within the general goal of keeping all of the Torah and *mitzvos*, and it can be a particular *mitzvah* or *middah* (character trait) that he is meant to perfect; so it is all within the general goal of Torah and mitzvos.

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Each person has a point where he is stronger than others; within Torah and mitzvos, there is also a person's individuality. The purpose of one's individuality and unique strong point is a path for him to get to the goal of Torah and mitzvos, and not as a purpose unto itself. Rather, utilizing our unique potential and individuality is our own way of how we can connect ourselves with Hashem, which is our general goal in which we are all the same in.

Q4: *Isn't the fact that we are all created with a "tzelem elokim" ("in the image of G-d") also a point in which all Jews are the same in?*

A: When Hashem created people, did He create them all with the same height, looks, natures and personality? Are we all the same, or are we different? We are all created different from each other. We each look differently, we each have different *middos*, we each have different ways of thinking, and we are different from each other in many ways. Why did Hashem make us differently? It is to show us that we each have a unique aspect – within the path of Torah and mitzvos - in how we can each come to recognize the Creator. Our individuality is a detail contained within a larger whole. It is not excluded from the whole, rather, it is within it. Each person needs to reveal his individual, unique point – and each person's unique point is different from anyone else's. Although Torah and mitzvos are the general goal of *Klal Yisrael*, within Torah and mitzvos there is also each person's individuality.

Q5: *Would learning about the "Ten Sefiros" help a person reach his\her particular strong point in life?*

A: How did you hear about the *Sefiros*? There are two ways how this knowledge is learned – either in a holy manner, or in a manner which creates confusion.

Q6: *Assuming that we learn this information from a Rav who is knowledgeable in these things....?*

A: If you find a person who is far removed from materialism of this world and he is a reliable and trustworthy person who can teach Kaballah to women, then yes. But this has to be researched well. Usually when people start studying Kaballah, they become very confused. If you go to learn Kaballah, you are entering into something where there is a possibility of becoming very confused.

Q7: *Is there a particular sefer the Rav can suggest that one can learn which will help him understand himself?*

A: There is no one way to take; there are many *sefarim* like this. I can't say which particular *sefer* to learn. If you are used to listening to our *shiurim*, then you can try learning *sefer "Da Es Nafshecha"* ("Getting To Know Your Soul", of this author). But there are other *sefarim* too which can help you understand yourself.

Q8: *Are there are other sefarim that the Rav can suggest we should learn, in order to understand ourselves?*

A: Let me explain what the difficulty with this is. Most of the *sefarim*\books which are being written today are taking ideas from gentile authors, and people are attempting to convert these ideas into *kedushah*\holiness. There is no *sefer* [about self-knowledge] being produced today that is entirely based on Torah and with no traces of non-Jewish ideas. Therefore, it is hard to know which parts of new *sefarim* are appropriate for us and which parts are not appropriate, because we

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don't know if it's taken from secular knowledge or not. That is why I can't recommend any on *sefer* [about self-knowledge] to learn - I do not know if everything that is written there is appropriate for a Jew to look at. Some of the *sefarim* being written today are borrowed from gentile thinking and the authors are trying to bring it into Judaism, and that is why I can't say to learn them or not to learn them; for this reason, it is a complicated matter to address.

Q9: *Are there no sefarim written by our Rishonim (earlier sages) and Acharonim (later sages) which can help us understand ourselves? Aren't those sefarim entirely sourced in kedushah?*

A: The *sefarim* written by the *Rishonim* were not written in an orderly style that speaks to our own language, so they are not that accessible to our generation. There are only a few parts in these *sefarim* which are written clearly, and they are hard for someone in our generation to go learn and come out with anything concrete from it.

As for the *sefarim* written by our later *gedolim*, such as the *sefarim* of the Alter of Kelm [*Chochmah U'Mussar*], the *sefarim* of Reb Yeruchem Levovitz zt"l [*Daas Torah* and *Daas Chochmah U'Mussar*] and the *sefarim* of Reb Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l [*Ohr Yechezkel*] – in order to know how to learn these *sefarim* properly, one needs to be a great *bar daas* (a very knowledgeable, wise, and sensible person) to learn these *sefarim* in a clear manner, to know when and where to apply the lessons.

There are those in our generation who do try to learn these *sefarim* in a clear manner, but at the same time, they are also learning non-Jewish books along with it. But when learning gentile ideas, one would have to be an even greater *bar daas* to know which parts of it are appropriate for a Jew and which parts should be discarded. And it indeed hard to know which ideas are taken from Torah and *Chazal* and which parts are being taken from gentiles, in the books and *sefarim* that are being learned today.

Therefore, it is difficult for me to answer this question.

Q10: *If I am into my health or I am a healer who makes others healthy, is this considered to be using my strongest point for a spiritual goal, or is it just an external factor in my life which is not part of goal in life as an individual?*

A: If a person identifies his field of practice as being the strongest innermost point that he is focused on – in this particular case, health - what will happen one day when he eventually takes leave of the world, where the soul leaves the body? What does a person remain with? We all leave the world one day, and our health isn't here anymore. Health is not part of who we are. But if you are concerned about health because you like to help others, that could be a very big lead to part of who you are, because then it is a spiritual goal. Meaning, if you are a healer because you want to do *chessed* to others – and you consider this your goal in life – then this is a spiritual goal, and this will make you happy. But if you're not doing it for a spiritual reason, and it's just because you are "into health" and you 'also' happen to do *chessed* with it, then it's not a spiritual goal in your life, and it won't give you happiness.

ADAR – ESSENCE IS LAUGHTER

Sechok – Holy Laughter

The *halachah* is that “when the month of Adar enters, we increase our happiness”.

Each month of the year has its own unique *avodah* (way of serving the Creator) which is the special spiritual power of that month. The month of Adar is a time of *simchah*/happiness; the holy *sefarim* say that it is the type of *simchah* known as “*sechok*” - “laughter”. Thus, our *avodah* in the month of Adar is to have “*sechok*” – “laughter.”

Sechok is not the regular kind of happiness which we identify as simply “*simcha*”; we will explain the difference between them.

The meaning of *simchah* is: “happiness that comes from heart”. We find *simchah* associated with song (*shirah*), which is a really an inner expression of happiness, as *Chazal* say that “There is no song except over wine.” Wine is also associated with happiness, because it is written, “*And wine gladdens the heart of man.*” Thus, *simchah* is an internal kind of happiness, an inner “song”, which is not expressed outwardly.

When a person laughs, though, he is revealing his happiness outward. When a person is happy inside but he doesn’t laugh, he has *simchah*; his happiness remains in his heart, and it isn’t expressed outwardly. When a person laughs, he has an outward expression of happiness – he brings up the happiness from inside his heart to his mouth, where he laughs from. This is “*sechok*” - when our happiness is revealed outward.

Sechok is when the happiness is revealed outward, through the mouth. We find this in the statement of *Chazal*, “It is prohibited for one to fill his mouth with *sechok* (laughter) on this world.”⁹

The increase of happiness during the month of Adar is meant for us to reveal the happiness outward from our heart. This is the meaning behind *sechok*/laughter, which is to have an open revelation of our happiness.

What exactly is our power of *sechok*? How do we serve the Creator using laughter? Usually it is only foolish and immature people who we can see laughing all the time. But laughter can also be used for holiness, as we will see.

Making Fun of Idols and Heresy

What is the holy kind of laughter? An example of this is what the *Gemara* says that it is permissible to make fun of idol worship.

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On a simple level, it appears that when we are supposed to make fun of something, such as scoffing at idol worship and heresy, we are using the same laughter we all know of, but that we are just using it for a holy purpose. But on a deeper understanding, the holy kind of laughter is a whole different kind of laughter than the one we know of.

There is holy laughter, and there is the laughter of fools. In the future, the non-Jews will want to keep the *mitzvah* of *sukkah*, but they will kick it over; Hashem will laugh at them. This is the root of the holy kind of laughter – Hashem Himself laughs.

Evil Laughter

The foolish kind of laughter is a base kind of laughter, in which a person just laughs in order to nullify someone else. This is because “*sechok*” comes from the word *soichek*, “grinding”. When a person grinds something, he is trying to nullify it and erase its existence.

People who laugh at others for the wrong reasons are laughing at them in order to nullify them. This is the evil kind of laughter, which is the laughter of fools. The *Gemara* also states that the “spleen laughs.” The base kind of laughter which is used to hurt other people is rooted in the spleen inside the body; the holy kind of laughter does not come from this.

Laughing Upon Seeing The Future In The Present

What is the depth of holy laughter, *sechok d'kedushah*?

There is a story in the *Gemara*¹⁰ that Rebbi Akiva and his colleagues were walking on the site of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. Everyone cried, except for Rebbi Akiva, who was laughing! They asked him why he is laughing. He said that he is laughing because just as the prophecy of the destruction was fulfilled, so will the end of the prophecy be fulfilled – that the *Beis HaMikdash* will be rebuilt.

This is actually the holy use of the power of “*sechok*”, laughter. It is laughter upon being content, specifically because a person sees the future good already in the present moment, and he thus has no reason to be sad. Here we see what holy *sechok* is. Laughter/*sechok* can be identified with seeing the future in the present. This causes a reason to laugh – when one sees the future right now, he sees that there's nothing to be sad about because it will turn out good anyway, so he just laughs.

Since Rebbi Akiva saw the how the future was being fulfilled, he was able to be happy now even in the present moment – and thus he laughed. This is really the depth behind the laughter – it is to feel the future in the present, which makes a person content and laugh off the problems.

Purim: Redemption Now

This is also the happiness of Purim and the month of Adar: It is recognize that the future Redemption is already taking place in the present. When the Jewish people thought it was their

¹⁰ Makkos 24a

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end, it was a really a continuation of their survival. This is the holy “laughter” of the month of Adar and the celebration of Purim: What we think is the worst thing possible, can actually be our very salvation. Haman tried to destroy us using the evil kind of *sechok*, because he was trying to nullify our existence. On Purim, we use the holy kind of *sechok*, and we laugh at this, at his ruined plans; at how the tables turned on him instead.

The depth behind the happiness in the month of Adar, and on Purim, is that the future good which we will have in the future is really happening *right now*. During the rest of the year, we are within the bounds of time – there is a past, present and future. But in the month of Adar, there is a unique revelation taking place: there is no time! It’s all happening now – the past, the present and future are all contained in the moment of right now.

Purim is essentially a reason to celebrate the future Redemption even now, before the Redemption has actually come. Purim is a taste of the future Redemption, and thus Purim is to essentially experience the future Redemption even now, causing reason for happiness. Now, we can really understand the depth behind *sechok*, the power of holy “laughter” in our soul.

The *Gemara*¹¹ states that “we are still slaves of Achashveirosh.” What, then, is the whole redemption of Purim, if we were still considered enslaved to Achashveirosh?! The answer to this is the following deep point. On Purim, we experienced a whole different kind of redemption than the redemption we experienced from Egypt. On Pesach, we left Egypt. On Purim, though we left the present moment – even though the redemption wasn’t here yet. We experienced the redemption even in the present. On Purim, there is a redemption taking place in the present moment. Therefore, we have *sechok* on Purim - that even though it appears to us that we are not yet redeemed, we really are. There is a *netzach netzachim*, an eternity, which we can experience right now, in the present moment – on Purim.

Drinking On Purim – Outwardly Showing the Happiness

Sechok/laughter is for a person to become so elated that he wants to express the happiness outward. When a person laughs, he is so happy to the point that he reveals it outward. This is the happiness we reach on Purim - *sechok*, an open kind of happiness, which we express.

On Purim, we accepted the Torah again, and this time it was willingly. As the Sages say, “They kept and accepted what they already accepted.” Purim is a time to make a new commitment to the Torah, to accept it out of love – which is an example of an outward expression of our happiness.

A very famous aspect of Purim is that we are commanded to get drunk on Purim, until the point of “*ad d’lo yoda*” - until one does not have any *da’as* anymore. The question that is asked on this is: How do we come to a new acceptance of Torah on Purim, if we are drunk and we have no *da’as*? The answer is that because we are so happy, we want to express it outwardly, in the form of *sechok*. This is why *Chazal* required that one drink on Purim. It is so that we should openly express our happiness, and reveal it outward. And in this way, by outwardly revealing our happiness, we can reach a new acceptance of the Torah on Purim.

11 Megillah 14a

ADAR - MAZAL FISH

Why Haman Rejoiced

The *mazal*¹² of the month of Adar, as is well-known, is *dagim* – fish.

There is a well-known Gemara: When Haman cast lots (*purim*) in order to decide which month to destroy the Jewish people, it landed on the month of Adar, the month where Moshe Rabbeinu left the world, and therefore he grew very happy, taking this is a sign that it will be a month of bad *mazal* for the Jewish people.¹³

Elsewhere, *Chazal* state a different reason of why Haman rejoiced. In the words of the *Midrash* in *Esther Rabbah*, Haman was happy that the lot fell on Adar because the *mazal* of Adar is fish, and fish can be swallowed.¹⁴

The Gemara elsewhere says that “Just as big fish swallow the smaller fish, so would people swallow each other, if not for fear of the government”. Amalek did not fear Hashem when they attacked the Jewish people in the desert. They were missing fear of a higher authority, so they did not care to swallow others. Haman, who descended from Amalek - the nation that does not fear Hashem – was ready to ‘swallow’ the Jewish people, for his lot landed on the month of Adar, the *mazal* of fish, which can get swallowed alive. Thus, we can now better understand why Haman rejoiced when the lot that he cast fell on the month Adar.

What was Haman’s downfall? *Chazal* say that Haman overlooked the fact that “Just as fish can swallow, so can they be swallowed.”¹⁵ Let us reflect a little into the depth of Haman’s downfall, and on the deeper meaning of how fish can both swallow and be swallowed. What is the depth of this matter that fish can swallow and also be swallowed?

Haman Thought That The Light of Moshe Rabbeinu Cannot Protect Us In Adar

Haman was happy because he thought that in the month of Adar, he will be able to ‘swallow’ the Jewish people. Let’s analyze this further.

The Gemara says that “the fish do not meet the sunlight, because they are always covered by the water. There is also a Gemara that says that “The face of Moshe is like the face of the sun.”¹⁶ In other words, the spiritual light of Moshe Rabbeinu, which is compared to the sunlight, cannot reach where the fish are.

12 astrological sign

13 Megillah 13a-13b

14 Esther Rabbah 7:11

15 Esther Rabbah ibid

16 Bava Basra 87b

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Thus, the depth of why Haman rejoiced was not simply because it was the month where Moshe expired (as is well-known, Moshe expired on the 7th of Adar, and the number 7 in Hebrew is **ז**, which is equal in *gematria* to the word **דג**\fish). Rather, it is because the spiritual power of Moshe is compared to the sun's light, which does not reach the fish.

That is the depth of why Haman rejoiced: since the *mazal* of Adar is fish, he thought that Moshe Rabbeinu's merits would not be able to protect the Jews in the month of Adar, because the light of the "sun" cannot reach the "fish". So it wasn't simply because Adar was the month where Moshe left the world; it was because even if Moshe were to have remained alive in the month of Adar, his light cannot reach the "fish". This insight made Haman confident that in the month of Adar, he will be able to destroy all the Jews.

Haman Thought He Is The 'Big Fish' Who Will Swallow All of the 'Little Fish'

There is yet a deeper understanding of why Haman rejoiced because he thought he could swallow the Jewish people in Adar.

The Gemara says that "by way of the world, the big fish can swallow little fish". When the lot that he cast landed on the month of Adar, which has the *mazal* of fish, Haman understood this to mean that he will be like a "big fish" who can swallow all the of little fish, which he thought was represented by the Jewish people. After all, the law of nature is that the big fish swallow the little fish, and not the other way around. Haman didn't dream of a possibility that perhaps all of the 'small fish' will swallow the 'big fish', because that goes against the laws of nature. The *mazal* of fish is that they can get swallowed by bigger fish; so Haman thought that he is for sure the "big fish" that can come and 'swallow' all of the "little fish".

What Haman Didn't Realize

Based upon the above understanding, we can now proceed to understand the following. What is the root of the disadvantage contained in the concept of fish?

The Gemara¹⁷ says, "Where do we find a hint to Haman in the Torah?" and the Gemara answers from the verse, "המין העץ הזה", "*HaMin HaEitz HaZeh*", ("From this type of tree"), which is said regarding the *Eitz HaDaas* (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). Regarding the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas*, one of the opinions in the Gemara is that it was *dagan*, a kind of grain. The word "*dagan*" (**דגן**) is a combination of the word *dag* (**דג**) and the letter *nun* (**נ**) which is equal to "50". In Aramaic, the word *dag*\fish is called "*nunei*", similar to the letter *nun*, which further hints to the connection between fish and the number 50.

The Gemara¹⁸ asks, "Where is a hint to Moshe from the Torah?" The Gemara answers that it is contained in the verse, "בשאגם הוא בשר", when Hashem wanted to destroy of all mankind, by the decree of the *Mabul*¹⁹; the Gemara says that the fish survived the *Mabul*. Herein contains the root of how the Jewish people could be saved. Haman thought that he could swallow all of the

17 Chullin 139a

18 ibid

19 The Deluge

‘fish’, the Jewish people, because the mazal of Adar is fish. But he didn’t realize that the fish were saved from the Mabul, when the rest of the world had been destroyed. Herein lays the downfall of Haman.

The Depth Behind The Fish That Swallowed Yonah

We can also understand it further. Where do we find the concept that the fish swallow others? There was a big fish that swallowed the prophet Yonah, who refused to listen to Hashem’s command to admonish the people of Ninveh. Hashem sent a big fish to swallow Yonah – here we see a concept in which a big fish can come and swallow a person.

The Sages explain that at first, when Yonah was swallowed by the big fish, he was enjoying it there, so Hashem made the big fish spit him out and then he was swallowed by a small fish.²⁰ From this we can see that not only can a big fish swallow a person, but even a small fish can swallow that which is bigger than it. Now we can better understand that the Jewish people were truly in danger. If even a small fish can swallow a person, surely the Jewish people were in danger of being swallowed by a ‘fish’ – whether the ‘fish’ is big or small.

There is a verse, “*From the stomach, the grave, I was rescued.*” As long as Yonah was in the big fish, *Chazal* say that it was like Gan Eden to him, and he had it all good there. When he was swallowed by a small fish, which Rashi identifies as a female fish – this represents the place that is “*from the stomach, the grave, I was saved.*” Normally it is a big fish which swallows a small fish, but with Yonah, a small fish swallowed something that was bigger than it. The fact that Yonah could be swallowed by a small fish is the root of the downfall of Haman, who wanted to swallow us.

Tzaddikim Will Eat Leviathan In The Future: The Root of Haman’s Downfall

Let us explain this more.

It is brought in *Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer*, and in other places in *Chazal*, that when the fish swallowed Yonah, after some time the fish said to Yonah, “My time has come to be swallowed by the *leviathan*.”²¹ Later when Yonah met the *leviathan*, he said to it, “Know that in the future, Hashem will make a festive meal for the *tzaddikim*, and what will be served in that meal? You!” Immediately the *leviathan* fled. What is the depth of this?

Normally, it is the bigger fish which swallow the smaller fish. Who is the biggest fish that swallows the smaller fish? The ultimate “big fish” that exists is the *leviathan*, which is called the ‘king of all fish’. It is the ultimate swallower. At the meal for the *tzaddikim* in the future, the “*seudah* of the *leviathan*”, it will be revealed that the one that swallows (the *leviathan*) is the one that will be swallowed.

²⁰ Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer 10, Midrash Tanchuma: Vayikra: 8

²¹ The “leviathan” (in Hebrew, *livyasan*) is often translated as the “whale”. The Sages state that Hashem created two of these giant whales, one of them a male and a female. The female whale was so strong that it could have destroyed the world. Therefore, Hashem killed it and salted its meat for the future, when the *tzaddikim* will enjoy the “*seudas halivyasan*”, the “festive meal of the *leviathan*”. Understandably, this is not referring to a physical pleasure, but to a spiritual bliss that goes beyond our comprehension.

This concept took place in the side of evil with Yonah, where it was not only a big fish which swallowed him, but even a small fish was able to swallow him. Afterwards when Yonah was saved, whereupon he said “*From the stomach, from the grave, I was rescued*”, and it came time for the fish to be eaten by the *leviathan*, what did Yonah say to the *leviathan*? He said to it, “We, the *tzaddikim*, will be the ones to eat you in the future.” From here we see the concept that the biggest fish of all, the *leviathan*, will be swallowed by the *tzaddikim*.

The Depth of The Danger: Man Can Be ‘Swallowed’ By ‘Fish’

There are two extremes to how this concept manifests in the side of evil.

At first we explained the simpler manifestation of this concept, in the side of evil: the fact that a big fish can swallow the smaller fish [which hints to how the Jewish people were in danger from Haman].

But this was not that much of a worry for the Jewish people, because we see that Yonah was enjoying it inside the belly of the big fish. The fact that a ‘big fish’ was threatening to swallow the Jewish people was therefore not such a threat to them, because it is still possible to survive after being swallowed by the ‘big fish’ – and be in a Gan-Eden like state, as Yonah was.

What, then, was the great danger to the Jewish people? It is from the fact that Yonah could be swallowed by a small fish, which he wanted to be saved from – of which he said, “*From the stomach, from the grave, I was rescued.*” So the Jewish people were truly in danger from the fact that Haman wanted to swallow them.

Haman is called “this oppressive man, this enemy”, to the Jews. He was the “big fish” that wanted to destroy all of the “small fish”, the Jewish people - just as Yonah was suffering when he was swallowed by the small fish. But it was not simply because the “big fish” can swallow the “small fish”. It was because even the small fish can swallow that which is bigger than it.

[Thus there was a very great danger to the Jewish people, because if there is a concept that even a small fish can swallow a person (like what happened with Yonah) – which is even worse than being swallowed being a big fish (and that is what happened with Yonah) – then the Jewish people were in very great danger from the ‘fish’, Haman, who is trying to ‘swallow’ them.]

What happened in the end? Everything was turned around for the better of the Jewish people. It reflected the state of the future, where the *tzaddikim* will eat the biggest fish of all, the *leviathan* – and so they were able to ‘swallow’ Haman, the ‘big fish’.

This is the depth of the words of the *Midrash* in *Esther Rabbah* that we mentioned in the beginning, that Haman rejoiced when the last that he cast fell on Adar, which has the *mazal* of Adar, for fish can be swallowed. He knew that not only can a big fish swallow the small fish, but that even the small fish can swallow that which is bigger than it; thus he was truly an enemy who was endangering the survival of the Jewish people.

What he failed to realize was that just as there is a possibility that they can be ‘swallowed’ by him, so can there be a possibility that they can ‘swallow’ him. And how indeed did the Jewish people have the power to ‘swallow’ him? It is not in the same way that a big fish can swallow a small fish. Rather, it is in the same way that the *tzaddikim* in the future will swallow the *leviathan*, the biggest fish of all.

The Torah Of The Future: A Level Beyond The Five Parts of The Torah

Haman built a gallows for Mordechai that was 50 *amos* high. The letter *nun* (נ) is equal to 50, which is similar to the Aramaic word “*nunei*”, which we mentioned earlier, in connection with the Hebrew word *dag* (fish). In the end, it was Haman who was hung on it, and this reflects the future, when the “big fish”, the *leviathan*, will be eaten by the *tzaddikim*.

The Gemara²² says that eating fish [on too much of a regular basis] is detrimental for the eyes. This can be connected with a statement of the Sages that “the eyes see, and the heart desires”,²³ which connotes that the eyes see forbidden sights and they become damaged spiritually; the root of this began ever since Chavah laid her eyes upon the *Eitz HaDaas*. Elsewhere, the Gemara says that “*nunei samei eina*”, “fish are a remedy to the eyes.”²⁴ How do we reconcile these contradicting statements?

The word *nunei* contains three letters (נני), and elsewhere the Gemara explains that the three consecutive letters of נ, ט, ג are a hint that *nunei*\fish are a *sam*\remedy to the eyes. Let us understand this deeply. In the side of evil, the letters ט and נ (the word *sam*\סמ) is placed in between the letters of ט and נ, which is the word סומא, blindness, of the eyes; this refers to the concept of how fish are bad for the eyes. But in the side of holiness, “fish” are good for the eyes; we see this from fish of Yonah. The Gemara says that its eyes became windows, and Yonah was able to see the entire ocean through it. This is how “fish” are good for the eyes, *nunei same eina* – “fish are remedy (סמא) for the eyes.”

The letters נ ט ג form the word נטע, which we find in the verse of the Torah of ויהי בנטוע הארון, when “the *Aron* (Ark) journeyed forth in desert”.²⁵ The Gemara says “the *Aron* is [contains] a *sefer* in and of itself”, apart from the five parts of the Torah that are the *Chumash*. This is related to the concept of how *nunei* (fish) is the *sama* (remedy) of the *eina* (eyes), because it contains the letters נטע, which stands for “*nunei sama eina*”. Let us explain.

The *mazal* of Adar is fish, so Haman rejoiced when the lot that he cast fell on Adar; the word for “rejoiced” here is שמח which has the letters חמש alluding to the *Chumash* (the five parts of the Torah). In other words, Haman can only have power of us if our Torah is on the level of *Chumash*, which is represented by the number 5.

But the *mazal* of fish represents a level that is above the number 5, for “fish are remedy the eyes”, (“*nunei sama eina*”), and the “*nunei sama eina*” (which is represented by the word נטע) by the *Aron* represents “a *sefer* in and of itself”, which means that there is another *sefer* besides for the 5 parts of the *Chumash*. In addition to this, the Gemara also says that besides for how the *sefer* contained in the *Aron* was a unique *sefer* in and of itself, there is also another *sefer* of the Torah – the *sefer* that is formed by those who learn the Torah. So altogether there are 7 parts to the Torah – the 5 parts of the *Chumash*, the *sefer* that was in the *Aron*, and the *sefer* that is formed by those who learn it. Thus, through the concept of “*nunei sama eina*” (represented by the word נטע) which we find by the *Aron*, a new *sefer* is revealed. This shows us that power of

22 Talmud Bavli: Berachos: Chapter Nine

23 Bamidbar Rabbah 10:2

24 Nedarim 54a

25 Bamidbar 10:35

nunei, fish, represents a whole new level of Torah – a level in which there are 7 parts to the Torah, and not 5 - which is what protected us from Haman.

In the time of Purim, the nation accepted the Torah willingly again, “out of love from the miracles”, as *Rashi* says. Haman wanted to swallow the Jewish people, but in the end it was they swallowed him. Herein lays the root of the light of the Torah that will be revealed in the future, which will go from 5 parts of Torah to 7; this was revealed on Purim. It revealed a new acceptance of Torah, a new *sefer* that was separate from the five parts of the *Chumash* – which is contained in the concept of “*nunei sama eina*”, represented by the word נסע, in the verse of ויהי בנסוע הארון.

Moshe told Yehoshua to write in a *sefer* of the events of the war with Amalek, as a remembrance. What is this *sefer*? It is the “new *sefer*” of the Torah which is apart from the *Chumash*, which will be revealed in the future - when the Torah will go from the 5 parts to 7 parts.

Depth of the Purim Seudah: A Resemblance of the Seudah of the Leviathan

The *seudah* that we eat on Purim is called “*mishteh v’simcha*”, of celebration and joy. The Gemara says that we have *oneg Shabbos* (pleasure on Shabbos) by eating big fish. But the *seudah* of the *leviathan* in the future will not just be a meal of eating big fish like we have today, because the *leviathan* is the biggest fish ever. Shabbos is called “a resemblance of the World To Come”, where we rejoice by eating big fish. The meal of the future, however, will be the “World To Come” itself, and it will not be with just big fish, but with the biggest fish ever - the *leviathan*.

On Purim, when we have a *seudah* of *mishteh v’simchah*, where we “celebrate the downfall of that wicked one”, it is really a resemblance of the *seudah* of the *leviathan*.

The Gemara says that Hashem created two *leviathans* – a male and a female. Hashem castrated the male *leviathan* and killed the female; there would be no marital connection between the male and female *leviathan*. Marital connection is called *da’as*, as the possuk says by Adam and Chavah, “*And Adam knew (va’yeda) his wife*”, which refers to conjugal relations. There will be no *daas* between the male and female *leviathan*, because there will only be one of them. This is the depth of the *seudah* we eat on Purim, in which there is an obligation upon a person to become inebriated to the point of *ad d’lo yoda*, of having no more *daas*. It reflects the *seudah* of the future where the *tzaddikim* will eat of the *leviathan* - where there will be no *daas*.

As is well-known, Purim is a light of the future. Purim will never cease, unlike the other festivals. The depth of this is because the *seudah* of Purim is a revelation of the *seudah* of the *leviathan* that will be in the future; Purim is a resemblance of it. The *seudah* of the *leviathan*, which we resemble in the *seudah* we have on Purim. Haman wanted to ‘swallow’ us, and in the end, it was us who ‘swallowed’ him. We ‘swallowed’ Haman – and that is the root of the future *seudah* of the *leviathan*, where the *tzaddikim* will all swallow the ‘big fish’.

The Secret of Haman's Downfall – The “New Sefer” of Torah That Was Contained In The Aron

In the *parsha* in the Torah of ויהי בנסוע הארון, there are two places where the letter נ appears. There is a regular נ at the beginning of the *parsha*, and there is an upside-down נ at the end of the *parsha*. At first Haman built a gallows of 50 *amos* to hang Mordechai on, and in the end Haman, it was hung on it; this is the hint contained in the upside-down נ – it hints to us that Haman's plans involving the number “50” (the gallows which he prepared for Mordechai which was 50 *amos* high) were turned upside-down on him, so his own plans were turned on him. Thus, it is the *parsha* of ויהי בנסוע הארון which contains the secret to Haman's downfall. From the power of the special *sefer* of Torah that was inside the *Aron*, came Haman's downfall – it is the “new Torah” of the future, whose light was revealed on Purim, which saved the Jewish people from Haman and which destroyed him, using Haman's own “50” that he had planned.

Thus, the light revealed on Purim is represented by the fish, particularly in the concept of *nunei sama eina*, “the fish are remedy to the eyes”. The “*nunei*”, the fish, brought about our reason to eat the *seudah* of the Purim (as explained until now) - where we celebrate the downfall of Haman, in which the power of “fish” was turned against him. It is all a resemblance of the *seudah* of the *leviathan* in the future.

This is the great spiritual “light” of Purim that came to the Jewish people, which the Megillah describes as *orah*, the “light”, that came to the Jewish people then. This was really the light of the new revelation of Torah of the future, which was contained in the *sefer* that was inside the *Aron*.

The 'Fish' and 'Wine' Of Purim

This is also the root of why there is an obligation to drink wine on Purim. Wine in Hebrew is יין, which is equal in *gematria* to the number 70, which parallels the number 7; as mentioned earlier, the number 7 is the level of the future Torah, in which the Torah will go from 5 parts to 7 parts.

On Purim, there is both eating and drinking. We eat fish and we drink wine at the Purim *seudah*. Eating the fish at the Purim *seudah* is a reflection of how the *tzaddikim* will eat the *leviathan* in the future. We also have wine on Purim, which also reflects the “wine” that will be served in the *seudah* of the future. These two aspects resemble the *seudah* of the *leviathan* in the future, where there will be “fish” [the new revelation of Torah, which is the secret of “fish is remedy to the eyes”] and “wine” [the future Torah, which will have 7 parts, parallel to the “70” of יין\wine].²⁶

At the *seudah* of the *leviathan* in the future, there will only be one fish in the world, and there will be no connection of *daas* between the male and female *leviathan*, because there will only be one *leviathan*; [for there will be no more *daas* – it will go beyond our *daas*].

This is the depth of “One is obligated on Purim to become inebriated to the point of *ad d'lo yoda*, (until he does not ‘know’)”.....

²⁶ A similar insight to this is brought in *sefer Nezer Yisrael* vol. II: Moadim, of Rav Avraham Tzvi Kluger *shlit"a*.

ADAR – ZEVULUN TRIBE

Adar Corresponds To The Tribe of Zevulun

The month of Adar is a time of joy (*simchah*) and laughter. Each of the months in the Jewish calendar corresponds to one of the 12 tribes. The month of Adar, according to the *Gra*, corresponds to the tribe of Zevulun.

“Rejoice, Zevulun, When You Go Out”

Of Zevulun, the Torah says, “*Rejoice, Zevulun, when you go out, and Yissocher in your tents*”.²⁷ Thus, Zevulun is associated with *simchah*, with rejoicing. Let us try here to understand what the concept of *simchah* is, to arrive at a deeper and true understanding of it.

The month of Adar, which is the month of *simchah*, corresponds to Zevulun. What is the *simchah* that we find in connection with Zevulun? The Sages explain that Zevulun goes out in commerce in order to support his brother Yissocher, who bears the yoke of Torah²⁸. Simply speaking, the joy of the tribe of Zevulun is because his tribe supports the Torah learning of Yissocher. However, who is happier, Yissocher or Zevulun? It would seem that Yissocher is happier, because he is the one who learns Torah. Yet the Torah says that it is Zevulun who rejoices! What is the *simchah* of Zevulun? And how does it apply to the *simchah* we have in the month of Adar?

Making the question stronger, the curse given to Adam after he sinned, was “*By the sweat of your brow, you shall eat bread*.”²⁹ Working for a livelihood is a curse, and it is part of the great sadness that came upon man as a result of the sin. Yet, the Torah associates the term *simchah* with Zevulun, even though Zevulun goes to work in order to support Yissocher. If anything, Zevulun should be sad that he has to engage in commerce and work, which is the curse that came as a result of the sin. How, then, is the business efforts of Zevulun specifically the cause of his *simchah*, when it is the curse of work which brought sadness to mankind?

The Techeiles In Zevulun’s Portion: A Reminder of Man’s Tachlis/Purpose

The Gemara says that Zevulun complained that his share in Eretz Yisrael does not include any cities or fields. Instead, he was given the seas, where there is no civilization. Hashem responded to Zevulun by saying, “There is something I have given in your portion which none of the other tribes have: the *chilazon* fish, from which *techeiles* comes from.”³⁰ The *chilazon* fish is found in

27 Devarim 33:18

28 Midrash Tanchuma, cited by Rashi in Beraishis 49:13

29 Beraishis 3:19

30 Talmud Bavli: Megillah 6a

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the sea, which is only in Zevulun's portion. Hence, the special portion given to Zevulun includes the *chilazon*, from which the turquoise wool of the *techeiles* is made from.

The Gemara says that when a person looks at *tzitzis* [when they are together with *techeiles*], the blue color of the *techeiles* reminds him of the sea, the sea reminds him of the sky, and the sky reminds him of the Throne of Glory.³¹ The word *techeiles* is from the word *tachlis*. The depth of this is because looking at *techeiles* reminds a person of his "*tachlis*" – his ultimate purpose. The "*tachlis*", the purpose and endpoint of the year, is the month of Adar. Thus, the deeper implication of Zevulun's possession of the *techeiles* is that his tribe is more connected with the spiritual *tachlis*, the purpose, of man. That is the "*tachlis*" revealed in the month of Adar, which corresponds to Zevulun – and that is the *simchah* of Zevulun's portion.

Hence, the month of Adar corresponds to *simchah* of Zevulun, the *simchah* of looking at *techeiles*, which reminds a person of his *tachlis*.

Haman's Decree: The "End" Which Awakened The Jewish People To Their Tachlis/Purpose

When Haman decreed destruction on all of the Jewish people, this was a decree that could have caused them either to totally despair, or to become awakened to their higher purpose. By realizing that their end was imminent, instead of sinking into lowly despair, they could now reflect about their end and reveal their *tachlis*, their true end, their true purpose.

The decree of death upon them, which was a threat of total annihilation of man – for the Jewish people represent all of Creation – was essentially a part of the process of rectifying the sin of Adam which had brought death upon the world. The entire Jewish people were now in a situation of total annihilation hovering above them, yet it was this very situation which spurred them on to repent and ultimately realize their higher purpose (*tachlis*). Through this situation where they faced annihilation and absolute destruction, they revealed their ultimate *tachlis*, their purpose.

Converts Come To Eretz Yisrael By Way of Zevulun

Moshe's blessing to Zevulun is that merchants would do business with Zevulun because he owned all of the ports at sea, which the merchants would first encounter when coming to do business in Israel. The businessmen of the tribe of Zevulun were all sailors, who did business at sea, and the Gemara says that all sailors are called *tzaddikim*, for they are always praying to Hashem to be saved from danger at sea.³²

The gentiles who threw Yonah into the sea when the ship was in danger from the storm were sailors, and it was these sailors who ultimately caused him to do *teshuvah*. A gentile is able to donate *korbonos* to the *Beis HaMikdash*, and the Gemara says that in the future, gentiles will

31 Talmud Bavli: Menachos 43a

32 Talmud Bavli: Kiddushin 81a

come to donate *korbonos* to the *Beis HaMikdash* and then they will be inspired to convert to the Jewish people. The gentiles will travel to Eretz Yisrael by sea, so they will first need to pass through Zevulun's portion, the sea, in order to get to Eretz Yisrael. Thus, the gentiles who convert to Judaism are only able to do so by way of Zevulun.

As explained before, Zevulun's portion, the sea, contains the *techeiles*, which reminds man of his *tachlis* (purpose). Thus, Zevulun's role is to rectify the sin of Adam (for the sin caused man to veer from his ultimate purpose). However, besides for this, Zevulun also accomplishes another role. By way of the sea, gentiles are able to come to Eretz Yisrael and donate *korbonos*, and are thereby inspired to convert to the Jewish people. Since Zevulun enables converts – which is the “purpose” of our exile, for the Gemara says that the Jewish people were exiled so that we can gain converts - Zevulun therefore represents the concept that it is precisely the end which reveals the root of all rectification.

Zevulun Represents The Concept of “Zevul” – Dung/Lowliness/Sin Can Ultimately Be Used For Fertilizer/Growth/Rectification

The word “Zevulun” is from the word *zevel*, animal dung that is used to fertilize fields. Fertilizer comes from the lowliest possible element on this world - the dung of animals. Yet, it is precisely this lowly material which fosters growth, for the animal dung is used to fertilize the fields, producing all of the crops. Hence, Zevulun represents the idea that even the lowest element in the world can ultimately bring about growth.

Adam's sin brought about the curse of work upon mankind, and the sin also made it possible for unworthy seed³³ to come from him. Had Adam eaten only from the *Eitz HaChaim* and not from the *Eitz HaDaas*, there would be no concept of any unworthy seed coming from him. Through the sin of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas*, there was now a “zevel”, a lowly element of “animal dung” which came to the world, as a result of the defilement caused by sin. But through “Zevulun”, the impaired “zevel” which was brought to the world through sin can be elevated and thereby bring about rectification to the world. Zevulun represents the concept of revealing growth and elevation in the very place of *zevell*/dung/lowliness.

The Simchah of Month of Adar/Zevulun: Transforming An “End” Into Joy

The great *simchah* (joy) that the Jewish people had in the month of Adar was that we were all facing annihilation at the hands of Haman, we were sad and we were mourning, we truly felt that it our “end” was near, and ultimately this terrible situation became transformed into joy, when we were saved from the decree³⁴. We turned our “end” and transformed it from sadness and despair into great cause for celebration and joy. This very concept, of using the idea of an “end” to reveal joy, is represented by Zevulun.

33 (i.e. Kayin, as well as the wasted sperm which came from Adam's body as a result of the 130 years in which he separated from Chavah. See Talmud Bavli: Eruvin 18b)

34 through fasting, prayer, and repentance

Zevulun's Joy – The Heavenly Beis HaMikdash

The Gemara³⁵ says that one of the seven heavens is called “*Zevul*”, and that in this part of Heaven, the Heavenly *Beis HaMikdash* resides, with a Heavenly *Mizbeiach*, and the angel Michael offers up the souls of the Jewish people on this *Mizbeiach*.

This word “*zevul*” can also mean “*mador*”, which means a “special chamber”, alluding to the special chamber in Heaven. This is a hint that the part of Heaven which is called “*zevul*”, which corresponds to Zevulun, is the “special chamber” in Heaven which houses the *Beis HaMikdash* of Heaven.

Hence, the *Beis HaMikdash* of Heaven belongs to Zevulun. There is a “lower” *Beis HaMikdash* and a “higher” *Beis HaMikdash*. On This World, which is the lower world, the *Beis HaMikdash* is shared by the portions of Yehudah and Binyamin. But in the higher world, in Heaven, the *Beis HaMikdash* is in Zevulun’s portion.³⁶ That is a deeper understanding of *simchah* that Zevulun is blessed with.

Zevulun's Commerce At Sea Rectifies The Curse of Work Given To Man

Earlier it was explained that Zevulun’s engagement in commerce rectifies the curse of work that has been placed on mankind ever since the sin of Adam. How does Zevulun’s commerce rectify the curse of work?

One reason is because Zevulun engages in commerce at sea, and by working in “water”, man is raised above the level of working with the “earth”. The element of “earth” became cursed with sadness ever since the sin of Adam, but through Zevulun’s commerce at sea, man is able to work joyously, on a level of “water”, which is more spiritual than the element of earth.

Zevulun: Turning End/Ruin Into Joy

Let us reflect on another way of understanding, however, which will also have practical ramifications in our own lives.

There is a beginning and end of the year. [The beginning of the year is the month of Nissan, thus the end of the year is the month which precedes it, Adar]. Ever since Adam sinned, the concept of “end” always implies destruction. As an example, the Torah says that Amalek’s end will be destruction. The end usually implies the ruination of something. That is the result of the sin. Through the concept of Zevulun, the concept of “end” is repaired, for Zevulun shows us the idea that any end or situation of ruination is actually a cause for joy. [This will be soon be explained].

Let us think about the times we live in. We do not know when the Redemption will come. But anyone can see that we are very close to the end. The world today is not as it should be. The spiritual level today has deteriorated to an abysmally low level. We don’t have the *Beis*

35 Talmud Bavli Tractate Chagigah 13b

36 See sefer Kometz Minchah (of Reb Tzadok HaKohen) II:76

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HaMikdash, the *avodah*, the *korbonos*, and because the ideal state is absent from our midst, we are missing so much. The Jewish people today are at the lowest level they have ever been in. What do we need to think, now that we are approaching the “end”?

The Gemara says that the final redemption will take place in stages. First the Redemption will come to the Mediterranean Sea, and then it will come to the sea of Teveria³⁷. From there, the Redemption will continue in stages. Thus, Teveria is the beginning point of the Redemption, but first the Redemption will come to the sea, which is Zevulun’s portion. From here we can learn a deep insight, that before the Redemption can arrive, we first need to pass through “Zevulun” – in other words, we first need to access the “joy” of Zevulun. This is the depth of the verse, “*For with joy they go out.*”³⁸ It is because we will “go out” from exile into the redemption amidst joy, which represents Zevulun. Thus, the final step before the Redemption will be that we will need to first go through the perspective of “Zevulun”, which is *simchah*/joy.

After the month of Adar is the month of Nissan, which is the month of the Redemption. The month of Adar corresponds to Zevulun. Hence, in order to arrive at the Redemption, we must first go through the “end” - the month of Adar - which is “Zevulun”. Practically speaking, we need to first reach joy, represented by Adar/Zevulun, in order to arrive at the “Redemption”, which is represented by the month of Nissan.

The Joy of Clarifying Our Tachlis/Purpose

But the question is: How will we traverse the month of Adar? Will we go through the month of Adar with sadness, or will we go through it with joy? How can we truly traverse the month of Adar in the sense of the verse, “*For with joy they go out*”? What is the depth of our *avodah* in the month of Adar to have true *simchah*?

The *simchah*/joy of Zevulun applies on a general level to mankind, as well as on a more individual level, with each person. On a general level, it is the joy of turning end/ruination into growth and rectification [as explained earlier]. But it also manifests on a more specific level. In anything a person does, one must clarify what the *tachlis* (purpose) of it is.

Our general *tachlis* is that we are all here to bask in the pleasure of becoming attached with Hashem, as explained in the beginning of *Mesillas Yesharim*. But besides for this general *tachlis* we all have, we each encounter a specific purpose to each thing. One needs to clarify what the *tachlis* is, of each thing that he encounters.

Zevulun’s portion is the sea. The purpose of the sea is to act as a border for the land. The sea is the end of the land. But the concept of Zevulun is that the “end” is the very cause for joy.

37 Tosefta Succah 3:9

38 Yeshayahu 55:12

Death – The “End” That Can Be Turned Into Joy

Of the month of Adar, and of the day of Purim especially, the Sages said that “Wine enters, the secret comes out.”³⁹ The *gematria* (numerical value) of the Hebrew word for “wine”, *yayin*, is equal to the number 70. The Sages said that once every 70 years, the *chilazon* appears in the sea.⁴⁰ On a deeper level, this corresponds to the “70” of the wine of Purim, which reveals secrets.

Had Adam never sinned, he would have lived forever. After the sin, he could only live for 1,000 years, and he gave up 70 years of his life [for Dovid HaMelech]. Thus, ever since the sin, the number 70 corresponds to the average lifespan of man, and as implied by the verse, “*The years of a man are seventy*”⁴¹.

When one thinks that he will live for 70 years, does this cause him to feel sad or joyous? Naturally, a person will be sad when he contemplates the fact that man is destined to live for an average of 70 years. When a person considers that he will eventually give an accounting before Hashem after he dies (as the Sages state, “Know that in the future, you will have to give an accounting”), the natural reaction is sadness. People are naturally sad when they contemplate the end of their life on this world. But when a person gains the perspective of “Wine enters and the secret comes out”, the “wine”, corresponding to the “70” years of a person’s life, reveals *simchah*. It is like the *chilazon* which comes out once every 70 years – the “secret” that comes out which reveals joy.

The *chilazon* appears in the sea, in Zevulun’s portion, corresponding to the heaven that is called *zevul*, where the souls of the Jewish people are offered on the Heavenly Altar. “*Zevul*” is a place of great joy on High, for it corresponds to Zevulun, who is blessed with *simchah*. What is the *simchah* that takes place in the heaven of *Zevul*? As the Sages explained, it is the happiness of the souls who willingly offer their souls to Hashem.

When one contemplates his time of death, and certainly when he is actually facing it, one will usually become saddened and mournful. A person naturally does not want to die. But a person is also able to die amidst a joyous state. One can choose to happily give away his soul to Hashem, when the time of his death comes. He can “offer his soul on the Altar” to Hashem, amidst joy.

Who merits a joyous kind of death, and who doesn’t? The *halachah* is that when one brings a *korbon*, he can only offer it of his own will. One cannot be forced to bring a *korbon* – he must have the will to give it. So too, when one is giving away his soul to Hashem as a “*korbon*”, when the time of his death arrives, if he does so willingly and out of joy, his soul is offered by the angel Michael on the Heavenly Altar, to Hashem. But if the time of one’s death comes and he feels forced to give his soul back to Hashem, he is not going to Hashem willingly. His death will be truly sad, for he has not been willing to give his soul to Hashem, and he is not offered on the Heavenly Altar to Hashem.

39 Talmud Bavli: Sanhedrin 70a

40 Talmud Bavli: Menachos 43a

41 Tehillim 90:10

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The month of Adar shows us that an “end” can be joyous, and it doesn’t have to be sad! This will only be true, however, when one is always searching to reveal his *tachlis* (purpose). One who always lives with a sense of the ultimate *tachlis*/purpose – which is that we are here to become closer to Hashem – will live a vastly different life, and he will die an entirely different kind of death, in contrast to one who is sad on his day of death, who is sad to die because he did not spend his life trying to become closer to Hashem.

How can the day of one’s death be a happy day for a person? It should be viewed as the great *simchah* of leaving the physical existence of the body, and becoming entirely a *neshamah* (Divine soul), which can be offered on the Heavenly Altar to Hashem. If one is prepared for this and he wants it, not only will he die amidst a state of joy, but his life will also be spent in a state of joy. If one doesn’t want to give away his soul to Hashem, though, and he would rather stay in his body on This World, then not only will death be the saddest thing for him, but he will feel somewhat “dead” even while he is living.

Clarifying Our Joy In The Month of Adar

When the month of Adar arrives, the month of *simchah*/joy, we need to know what *simchah* is, and we need to ask ourselves if we really have true, pure *simchah* in our life. If not, than any joy that we have is superficial, it is not inner and genuine. When our joy is only superficial, if this it can be said, “*And of what purpose is this rejoicing?*”⁴²

One first needs to know what the root of *simchah* is: what true joy is. Then, on a personal level, one needs to clarify: “Am I personally connected to true *simchah*?”

The first part is to clarify what real *simchah* is. It has been explained here that the concept of *simchah* is whenever we reach the end of something. The end either brings sadness and mourning, or, it can offer us joy, a new beginning, an elevation to a new state. After the month of Adar comes the “head” of all the months of the year, which is Nissan, so Adar is the end of the year. The joy that we can attain in the month of Adar is when we complete the year and rise to a year of more elevated growth than the previous year. In that way, we take the “end” and reveal joy in it – we are using the “end” as a way to reveal a new, elevated beginning. That is the depth of the joy is in this month.

Now we can better understand what the joy of Zevulun is. What comes from all of Zevulun’s business efforts? What does he have from all of his hard work? Since Zevulun’s joy is because he is earning livelihood in order to support Yissocher’s Torah learning, whenever he engages in commerce, he is aware of the *tachlis*/purpose of it all. He is only interested in what *results* from his work, not in the actual work itself: his work will enable Yissocher’s Torah learning.

True joy is when one reaches the “end”, the goal, the purpose/*tachlis*, of what he has done. When one does not clarify the purpose of what he is doing, he is living without a purpose and his life will be a sad one. But when one is aware of the purpose of all that he is doing, there is joy throughout all that he does.

42 Koheles 2:2

The Depth of The Sadness In Our World

Let us reflect. Why is the world full of so much sadness? Simply speaking, it is because ever since Adam sinned, there has been a curse of sadness placed on mankind. Man was cursed with “*By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread*”, the curse of working hard in order to earn livelihood and to support himself and his family, and woman was cursed with the pains of pregnancy, childbirth, and childbearing. But there is also a deeper reason why there is so much sadness that fills the world. It is because people do not clarify the *tachlis*/purpose of what they are doing whether it is before they start or whether they are already at the end of what they do.

Accessing Joy On Shabbos Only When We Are Living With Spiritual Goals

[The following insight can give us a clearer understanding of the idea.] Zevulun was the sixth child of Leah. The number 6 corresponds to the 6 days of the week (also called the “6 days of action”) which is for work [action], as the Torah says “*For six days you shall labor*”⁴³. The purpose, the *tachlis*, of the 6 days of the week is the seventh day, Shabbos. The connection between Zevulun and the number 6 is that they lead to a greater purpose, a goal, which enables one to start a new beginning.

Shabbos is the purpose, the goal, the *tachlis*, of the 6 days of the week. It has been explained here that *simchah*/joy comes when one reaches the *tachlis* of something. Since Shabbos is the *tachlis* of the week, what is the *simchah* on Shabbos? Is it a joyous day because that a person rests from the work that he has during the six days of the week...? On Shabbos, there is a concept of *oneg*, pleasure. Besides for *oneg Shabbos*, however, there is also *simchah* on Shabbos. What is the *simchah* on Shabbos?

The *simchah* of Shabbos is, that now that the six days of the week have ended, one has completed his work, as the Sages say of Shabbos, that it is “As if all your work is done”⁴⁴, and now one can be raised to a higher spiritual level than the previous week. That is the *simchah* of Shabbos! It is so that we can become raised to a higher spiritual level than the previous week!

The *simchah* of Shabbos can only be experienced by one who realizes that Shabbos is the purpose, the goal, the *tachlis*, of the six days of the week. That is the depth of why Shabbos is a day of *menuchah* (serenity), epitomized by the fact that one should view Shabbos as if “all your work is done.”

If Shabbos comes and a person is simply thinking about what he did this past week and what he will do next week, he doesn't utilize the day of Shabbos properly, because he is not connecting to the *menuchah* of Shabbos. He doesn't view Shabbos “as if all your work is done”, because he doesn't have spiritual goals, and he doesn't see Shabbos as the goal of the week, and he certainly isn't trying to get to a higher spiritual goal for the following week. So he cannot experience the *simchah* on Shabbos, and he goes into the following week with a sense of sadness.

43 Beraishis 20:9

44 Mechilta (ibid)

Why is it that people don't connect to Shabbos when it is here? It is really because they are not connected to a *tachlis* (goal/purpose) in all that they do, during the rest of the week. When people aren't trying to aim for any spiritual goals, they cannot live a life of joy, and they are left with sadness. It is the same sadness felt by a person when he realizes is soon going to die, when he realizes how much he has wasted his life, for he spent his entire life without trying to get to any spiritual *tachlis*/purpose.

Hashem said about Shabbos, "I have a good present in My hidden treasury, and Shabbos is its name."⁴⁵ It is called a "good present" due to the joy that is available on Shabbos. The joy on Shabbos is the same "joy" that is described by the verse, "*For with joy they go out*" - it is the joy of "going out" of the previous spiritual goals of the past week, for the goals have been completed, and he is now onto another spiritual goal for the coming week. For joy/*simchah* is accessed when we reach an end, a purpose, a goal – a *tachlis*.

When Shabbos arrives, certainly one's work is still incomplete in the physical world, but in the depths of the soul, one can feel on Shabbos that he has reached the spiritual purpose of all of his work of the past week. Then, one is empowered to enter into the new week with joy.

The Depth of Zevulun's Joy: Living With a Sense of Spiritual Purpose

Zevulun's joy when he goes out to engage in commerce is because he is constantly bringing himself closer to his *tachlis* (spiritual purpose), throughout all of his business efforts. He is engaging in the pursuit of livelihood with a goal in mind: because he is concerned for the Torah study of Yissocher, who represents the Torah scholars.

A "Torah scholar is called Shabbos"⁴⁶, so when Zevulun engages in commerce in order to support the Torah learning of Yissocher, on a deeper level, he is thinking about "Shabbos", for the ultimate spiritual goal of all six days of the week.

The Sages said that "*Today is for doing, and tomorrow is for reward*"⁴⁷ – and the "reward" for a person's work is when one reaches the *tachlis* of all of his work. Zevulun sees the *tachlis* of all his work, and with that perspective, he sets out to engage in his business efforts.

Beginning and Ending The Year With Joy

Simchah comes when one reaches the goal, the end, of what he does. What about when a person begins what he does? Can a person have *simchah* when he begins any undertaking? A person can certainly begin with an attitude of joy, but he will only be able to remain with the joy if he is consistently aiming for a goal. When one is always aiming to begin another goal after he completes the previous, he will have a constant joy throughout all that he does, and not only when he arrives at his goal.

45 Talmud Bavli: Shabbos 10a

46 Zohar III 29a

47 Talmud Bavli: Eruvin 22a

When the month of Adar ends, one needs to ask himself: “Do I feel a *simchah* in my soul? Do I feel that I have completed my “work” of this past year, and that I am now moving on to another spiritual goal for the coming year?” If one can answer “Yes” to this question, then he will be able to access true joy in the month of Adar and he will also be able to take the joy with him into the next year.

By contrast, if one does not feel that he has completed any goals this year – since he wasn’t aiming for it - he will be sad in the month of Adar! And he will also enter into the coming month of Nissan with sadness...

Illuminating The Entire World With The Light of Joy: When A Jew Lives With A Sense of Spiritual Purpose

In the future, the gentiles will convert and come to the *Beis HaMikdash* to bring *korbonos*, and this will be due to the true *simchah* of Zevulun, which will be revealed fully in the Jewish people and which will subsequently spread to rest of the world.

Shabbos is only for the Jewish people, for the *halachah* is that a gentile is not allowed to keep Shabbos.⁴⁸ But in the future times, when the Jewish people will keep a genuine and inner kind of Shabbos - meaning, when they access the spiritual light of *tachlis*, of revealing the purpose that they were created for – this spiritual light will illuminate the entire world, where it will influence even the gentiles, to convert to the Jewish people. If a Jew isn’t living for any spiritual goals - if we do not clarify our own *tachlis*, then we don’t reveal the true *simchah* in the world, and then the spiritual light of the *tachlis* cannot illuminate the world.

On Purim, there was a great revelation of spiritual light. Many gentiles converted to Judaism at that time, because they became afraid of the Jewish people. On a deeper level, these gentiles converted due to the spiritual light of the “joy” of “Zevulun”, which the month of Adar corresponds to [and the events of Purim took place in the month of Adar]. Since it wasn’t yet the time for the future Redemption, this joy was still incomplete, and that is why the gentiles only converted out of fear, and not out of true joy. But in the future, there will be a great joy which will illuminate the entire world, which will cause the gentiles to convert to the Jewish people out of joy [as opposed to fear], because by that time, we will have all reached our *tachlis*.

Practically Speaking: Living A Life of Tachlis

Making this concept practical, the more we set spiritual goals in what we do, and we keep making new goals for ourselves after we reach our previous goals, the more we will live a life of genuine, inner *simchah* joy, creating a spiritual light of *simchah* that will also influence the entire world for the better.

By contrast, if we are not trying to reach any spiritual goals in what we do and we do not try to formulate any new spiritual goals for ourselves, then we will not be reaching our *tachlis*. We will not be able to start new spiritual beginnings either, if we aren’t trying to complete any

48 Talmud Bavli: Sanhedrin 58b

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previous spiritual goals. Whenever we begin something new, it may either be due to a previous failure - or because we have completed a previous worthy goal, and now we are onto another worthy goal.

So, if each person on his/her own level, at whatever spiritual level he/she is at currently, is willing to accept upon oneself to aim for some spiritual goal and then aim for another, higher spiritual goal, of this it can be said, “*They advance from strength to strength*”.⁴⁹ But, if we are not aiming for any spiritual goals, then we will not reach them, and then we cannot reach the true *simchah* that is available in the month of Adar.

When the Sages said that “Wine enters and the secret comes out”, this is only true for one who lives all the time with a sense of *tachlis*/purpose in all that he does, which brings one to true *simchah*/joy. It is reminiscent of what the Torah says about Avraham Avinu in his old age, that “*he was old and becoming of his years*”⁵⁰, meaning that he constantly lived with a sense of *tachlis*/purpose to his life, who truly utilized the very opportunity of living.

In Conclusion

May we all merit, with *siyata d’shmaya*, together, that each Jew should reach his own goals, and that we should all reach our ultimate *tachlis*, and through this we will merit “*A new light on Zion will shine*”⁵¹, which will renew all of the Creation. May it come speedily in our days. Amen.



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49 Tehillim 84:8

50 Beraishis 24:1

51 as recited in the morning blessings before the Shema