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“There is no happiness except in wine”

The Gemara (*Pesachim* 116a) states that in the Temple era, there was no happiness except in meat; nowadays, there is no happiness except in wine. In addition to this, the Gemara says that women rejoice with new clothing and jewelry, and children rejoice with candy.

It is clear that these things are not just superficial ways to get to our happiness, but that they reveal to us what an inner happiness is. Let us understand how we can do this.

We know that we have a *mitzvah* to be happy on Yom Tov - *V'somachta b'chagecha*. If we have to be happy with the Yom Tov, then how are we allowed to rejoice with meat and wine? Don't we know that the rule is “We do not mix one happiness with another happiness”?

The answer to this is that being happy on Yom Tov is an inner kind of happiness. In order to get to the inner happiness, we need to use something to get to it - through these external factors of meat, wine, clothing, jewelry and candies. We aren't mixing two kinds of happiness - we are simply using an external tool (physical pleasure) to reach our inner happiness.

Using The Body To Awaken Our Happiness

To illustrate how this works, let's say a person comes to a joyous occasion, (such as a wedding), but he doesn't feel happy. What should he do? He needs to awaken his inner happiness through festivity, and that will bring out his inner happiness.

On Yom Tov, we know that we have an inner happiness, and besides for this there is also a time of happiness in the air; it is *zman simchaseinu*, a “time of our happiness”. The time of Yom Tov itself is a reality of happiness. But we usually don't feel this happiness - why not?

It is because our body covers over our soul, and this prevents us from feeling our inner happiness. What can we do about this? This is really why we have meat and wine on Yom Tov. We make the body happy - and through that, we get to our soul.

The whole purpose of meat and wine on Yom Tov is not a purpose of itself. It is there to awaken in us the inner happiness; when we loosen up our body by making it happy, we can tap into our happiness of the soul.

Happiness Of The Body

A person is made up of a body and a soul. There are a lot of details to this matter, and it is a very complex discussion with many factors involved. But that is the general makeup of a person: body and soul.

Happiness is rooted in our soul, while sadness is rooted in our body. There is also an inner kind of happiness and an external, superficial kind of happiness; the external happiness is when we make our body happy, and the inner happiness is our soul's happiness.

When we feel happy, let us ask ourselves: Why am I happy? Is my body happy – or is it my soul that is happy?

How do we know if our happiness is coming from our body or from our soul?

Happiness of the body is when a person acts silly (*holelus*), which is not really happiness. It might look like happiness - but let us explain why it isn't, and what it really means to be happy.

Most people have not yet revealed their souls. People are more aware of their body than their soul, so the happiness that most people look for is happiness of the body. Since this is so, the actual search for happiness that people have comes from our body's hold on us!

This is because the body itself has a tendency toward sadness. People get sadder more easily than they become happy, because since we have a body, the body has a natural pull toward sadness, and this makes us "search" for happiness.

Why is our body pulled toward sadness? It is because the body was made from the earth; the element of earth in a person is the source of sadness.

We can see clearly that most people are searching for happiness, and that they are searching for **physical** happiness – comfort or indulgence.

Each person needs to clarify for himself: From where does my happiness come from? Am I mainly getting happiness from physical pleasures, or from spirituality?

You must know that if you are searching for happiness of the body, it will never bring you happiness -- only destruction to your life.

Happiness Of The Soul

We have explained what happiness of the body is. What is happiness of the soul?

We will review what we have said before: It is not about what I gain and achieve, but it about what I *overcame* in order to get there. (The gain is necessary for our happiness too, but when we achieve it, the happiness we have is coming from our efforts we put in to get there).

Our body, by contrast, is only interested in results. Our body's happiness thrives on results; it is not satisfied with effort alone. This resembles what is written, "*Eat and drink today, for tomorrow we shall die.*"

The Desire To Escape Reality - Happiness of the Body

Now, we will go further with this and understand more about the happiness of the body, which is not really happiness.

Our body seeks happiness really **because a person wants to leave his body**. People want to feel like they're on a high so they can forget about their body and put themselves out of their misery for a bit. Although it is written, "*For with happiness we go out*", the body's happiness doesn't want to leave "with" happiness – it wants to leave **itself**! But this is not happiness. The whole wish in a person to escape his body is an antithesis to being happy.

Since the body is rooted in sadness, it cannot ever be happy, and thus our body cannot bring us happiness.

What is the way then for us to be happy?

Happiness can only come when I overcome something. The fact that I just want to get out of my situation is only happiness of the body, and it is all about results. The body seeks happiness only in getting something. This will not bring happiness to a person.

A person who lives a more materialistic kind of lifestyle always wants to leave his current situation and thinks that when he does so, this will give him happiness. But the happiness of the soul desires happiness because it wants what life is about – not to only anticipate results, but to live life and to get there.

Happiness of the soul is about what I have overcome, while happiness of the body is a desire to escape reality. With happiness of the body, the person doesn't really want to enter into reality – he just wants to escape it. Such happiness is doomed for failure, because with such a hope, there is nothing to really be happy about.

To illustrate why this is so, Chazal say that "Hashem does not rejoice in the downfall of the wicked." When the wicked perish, this doesn't make Hashem happy, and the depth to this is because it's not enough of a cause for happiness. So what if the wicked perished? It didn't bring anything good; it just got rid of something bad. There is nothing here to be a cause for a happiness, and that is why Hashem does not rejoice in the downfall of the wicked.

The fact that the body seeks to escape itself for a little bit doesn't produce happiness. The happiness which the body seeks is not built on anything; it's all about putting oneself out of his misery for a little bit.

By contrast, happiness of the soul is a happiness that is based on something – it is built upon something.

An example of this is *Simchas Yom Tov*, which is happiness that has basis to it. We are being happy about something we have; there is something **here** to be happy about. And on *Simchas Torah*, we are happy over the completion of the Torah – not because it is over, but because of what we **have**. When we truly **have** something, that is a cause for happiness.

Leaving The Element Of Earth To Reveal The Other Three Elements

The natural situation which Hashem created the world with was to be happy. Creation itself is an epic situation of happiness. The universe is really one big happy existence! It is only sin which brought about sadness to the world and altered the natural state of things.

Sin, which caused sadness, is rooted in the body, and the element of earth in the body is the source of

all sadness. The other elements – fire, wind and water – are the elements which we can use to bring us happiness.

Without using the other three elements, a person can't be happy. When a person just wants to escape his element of earth – when he just wants to escape his sadness – such happiness is only being imagined. It isn't real.

When people just let loose from their body, what do they do? They enter into a fantasy. It's not happiness – it's just being imagined.

Real happiness is when one removes his element of earth, in order to reveal the other elements. The desire to just let loose and escape reality is just “fun” – it's **imagined** happiness.

In the future, our happiness will be perfect and complete. This will not just be a departure from our element of earth – it will be a state in which our very element of earth is elevated to the higher elements of water, wind and fire.

This is why we say on Yom Tov, “*And bring happiness to your land*”. The “land” can also be a reference to our element of earth – that in the future, even our element of earth will be able to become happy.

This is also why on Yom Tov, the *halacha* is that one has to spend “half the day in personal enjoyment and half the day in spiritual enjoyment” – because the purpose is to elevate our personal enjoyment through spiritual enjoyment.

Of course, we are not saying that there is never a point in leaving our element of earth. Sometimes this is necessary (that a person should leave his “earth” a little bit). But we are just saying that it is not the main part of our job. Our main Avodah is to elevate our element of earth – not just to want to leave it.

Simchas Yom Tov

Simchas Yom Tov is through meat and wine. This is really meant to make our body happy, and through that, one can awaken his soul's happiness. But if a person is happy on Yom Tov just because there's good-tasting meat and fine wines, he becomes engrossed in the meat and wine and he forgets their whole purpose. The meat and wine of Yom Tov are meant to be used as a tool, not as a purpose unto itself.

We have to uproot our superficial happiness and arrive at an inner happiness. We need to find something to **be** happy about it; it is not enough to just eliminate our sadness. *Simchas Yom Tov*, as well as the happiness that *tzaddikim* have in spirituality, is not just a way to escape sadness – it is to arrive at something to be happy about, to actually **have** something.

Being Aware To Why You Are Happy

When we are happy, we need to become aware why we are happy now. When we feel happy, we need to ask ourselves: Is our happiness coming from our body, or from our soul?

Happiness of the body, which is superficial, is to simply “look” for happiness. It is not about to find what to be happy about; it is just “I want to be happy.” This isn't yet happiness! You must know if you are just “looking” to be happy, or if you are looking for **what** to be happy about. There is a big difference.

When a person is just searching for happiness, he's just looking to escape his depression. The happiness he will find will only be the body's happiness. His search comes from a desire to want to leave his body.

What a person really needs to do is to find **what** to be happy about, as opposed to just putting himself out of his misery.

Calming The Body

There is a method people use to try to reach their soul's happiness, through the body -- which is by calming the body in various ways.

This cannot work, however, if the focus is on what one's body will feel; we are referring to when a person is mainly concerned that his body shouldn't get in the way. If that is the intention, then calming the body is beneficial and can help one get through to his soul, because then the person is trying to remove his bodily hold so he can penetrate into his soul. But if a person is calming his body simply because he wants to experience physical comfort, then he's just indulging in physical pleasure.

We must know that if all we are trying to do is just to escape our misery, then we won't find happiness. We need to find something to be happy about. To do this, we need to know: what brings out our soul's happiness?

On Yom Tov, there is a *mitzvah* to rejoice with meat and wine. We must understand that these are really just tools we can use to do the *mitzvah*, but the essence of this *mitzvah* is to reveal an inner happiness.

Happiness - To Have What To Be Happy About

Why is it so hard to be happy on this world we live in?

It is because the souls of most people aren't revealed; we need to open ourselves up. We have to reveal our soul in order to be happy, because that will show us what we truly have.

Happiness comes from something tangible which we have. *Sukkos* is called *zman simchaseinu*, a time of our happiness, because it is also *chag ha'asif* - the time in which produce is harvested and gathered together. When a person has what to be happy about, he can be happy. There is no such thing as happiness when there's nothing here to be happy about; there has to be something tangible here in order for happiness to take effect.

If all I'm happy about on Yom Tov is that I have delicious food, elegant wines and nice new clothes, this will never make me happy - because this isn't really what I "have." Can meat, wine and clothing be considered something you "have"? A person needs to really "have" something in order to be happy...