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Intoxication on Purim - Removing the “Garments” of the Soul

The first time in the Torah where intoxication is discussed is in the end of Parshas Noach: *“And Noach, man of the field, planted a vineyard, and drank from the wine, and he became drunk, and he was exposed amidst his tent.”* [1] The Torah uses the word “exposure” (ויגל) when garments are removed.

When a person is wearing several articles of clothing and he removes one of them, he is a bit more revealed, and [the same can be applied to the soul: the more that the garments atop the soul are removed] the closer one is to revealing his essence. That is one kind of removal of garments. But there is another kind of removal of garments: where the garments are removed totally. This is the implication of the word ויגל [that the Torah writes concerning Noach; its inner meaning is that it is referring to this concept of removing the soul’s garments.]

Thus, it is said that “When wine enters, secrets come out” – through intoxication, a person’s essence comes forth; his inner essence is revealed outward.

It is upon us to think: What are the inner “garments” [that are atop our soul]? Why is there a need to remove those garments? And what is to be gained from it?

It is explained in the *sefarim hakedoshim* that clothing serves as a protection. With physical clothing,

our clothing protects us from harm, so that we feel less of an impact if something strikes against our body. The same is true for the inner garments that are atop our soul. Those garments of the soul serve to protect the inner point of the soul.

To illustrate, Reb Pinchos of Koritz was careful that his clothing shouldn't get a tear, because he felt that a tear in the garment would manifest itself as an inward breach as well. He brought proof to this from the fact that we merited redemption from Egypt due to not changing our style of dress. A change in how we appear, even a little tear in the fabric, could be a danger to the soul – because the “garments” have taken a hit.

In the laws of mourning, we must tear our clothing. In other words, mourning is a time to “remove garments”. So we find that both intoxication and mourning are times where there is a concept of “removal of garments”. We need to understand: why is there a concept of “removal of garments” when it comes to both mourning and the time of joy of Purim?

Purim - The Revelation of the Point Where There Is No 'Avodah'

It is well-known that the Hebrew word for “garment”, *levush* (לבוש) has the same letters as the word *shvil* (שביל), “path.” Normally when we receive Divine sustenance from Hashem during the rest of the year, we are receiving it through *levushim*, through “garments”, but there is another way to receive from Hashem: when a person nurses forth a life-giving energy directly from the Source, with no means in between.

From a deeper understanding, we can only begin “nursing” after birth, but before birth there is no nursing, for before birth we are a fetus in the mother's womb, receiving life directly from the source without having to nurse. The concept of the fetus shows us that there is a point where we can be above the need to “nurse” forth sustenance from Hashem through various intermediate means, and instead we are directly receiving it from Him.

This can also help us understand the difference between a soul with garments and a soul with removed garments. It can be understood when we consider the difference between a fetus and a newborn – the fetus does not have to nurse, because it is getting its energy directly from the source, whereas a newborn has to nurse, now that it is outside the mother.

The ways of serving Hashem which are normally familiar with [from the rest of the year] are based upon the 12 unique paths of the sons of Yaakov Avinu, the *shevatim* (the tribes), and an all-inclusive path that contains all of them, which adds up for a total of 13 paths. This is written about by the *Arizal*. After that division comes a further subdivision of 70 paths, parallel to the “70 souls” who descended from Yaakov Avinu that went down to Egypt. This further divides into the 600,000 souls of the Jewish people [adding up for a total of 600,000 unique paths of serving the Creator].

But that is all within the “garments” of the soul. The garments of the soul are but “paths” of how to serve the Creator. But when we remove the “garments”, we remove all of these varying paths, and we reveal in its place one thing alone: "כי אותך לבד חפצתי", “For it is You alone that I desired.” This is referring to the deepest point in the soul, which searches only for the King of all Kings. There, all of the disparate parts of the soul are nullified to this one point. There are no divisions there, only unity; there is a true unity of all creations with their Creator there. This revelation can be accessed through Purim.

Of the rest of the year, it is said, “Today is for action, and tomorrow is for reward.” During this current world, which lasts for 6000 years, it is said, “You shall always work.” This current world is for work; there is *avodah* here. “Today is for action.” But in the future, there will be no more work. They will be

"days of which I will have no desire"[2], there will be no more *bechirah* (free will), no more "work" to do.

The Sages state that in the future, all of the festivals will cease except for Purim. In the future, there will be no more *avodah* and no more free will. Thus, Purim is a revelation of this point where there is no more *avodah* to be done.

In the normal dimension of time that we are familiar with [before the future, or whenever it is not Purim], there is *avodah*, and there are various ways of how one serves the Creator. "They were all given from one shepherd." [3] When it comes to all of these paths, one must clarify what his own *avodah* is and what the particular suitable path for him is to act. But when it comes to the inner point [that can be revealed on Purim], **where one is searching only for Hashem alone**, all of the "garments" are removed.

The search there is very clear: it is entirely a search to "see our King" [4]. In that point, there can be no divisions. There, all of the paths in serving the Creator are unified under one point.

The Point in the Soul Where There Are No Doubts in Our Avodah

To where will this concept apply?

Clearly, this point can only be revealed for the day of Purim, and not beyond that. However, every year there are always two days of Purim (in Eretz Yisrael), due to the cities in Jerusalem that have a status of a "walled city" since the times of Yehoshua. And in some years, there is *Purim Hameshulash*, a "three-day Purim", with laws of Purim spanning the course of three days. The concept of a "three-day Purim" gives more permanence to Purim, because the number "three" establishes a regular status, as we find in the laws of *chazakah*. The fact that there can be a three-day shows us that Purim doesn't have to go away - it can be made permanent.

Every one of us knows that the day of Purim comes and goes each year. We go through regular routine of the year, where we have *avodah*, and then it is Purim where we transcend all that *avodah*, and then we are back to routine of this world, which is called "*olam*", from the word *he'elam* (concealment). So what is the point of Purim? What does it reveal to us? This leads us to discover a very inner point, which is actually the entire root of all our *avodah* - as follows.

One of the Four Questions we ask on the night of Pesach is, "What is this *avodah*?" In Egypt, we were the slaves of Pharaoh, and when we were redeemed, we became the servants of Hashem. The exodus from Egypt, which we celebrate on Pesach, was a redemption from our status of slavery, where we became the servants of Hashem instead.

But on Purim, we did not leave the servitude of the exile. The *Gemara* says, "We are still the servants of Achashveirosh." [5] We were not redeemed from slavery on Purim. What then did Purim reveal to us? What redemption did we experience on Purim?

It was a deeper revelation than what the exodus from Egypt revealed. It was a revelation that even as we are enslaved in exile, at the same time we can be above the slavery. That is exactly the secret of the redemption - when we reveal the point that is "above" slavery, even as we are amidst it. This is the redemption of Purim, where we discovered the deep point in the soul where there is no "*avodah*".

The root of all evil is Amalek, whom we erase each year on Purim; Amalek induces evil doubts into people. Our personal *avodah* of erasing Amalek within ourselves is to transcend the doubts. When we are involved with *avodah*, we have doubts. All of our *avodah* is filled with doubts. But when we go above the point of *avodah*, there are no doubts there.

When one connects himself to the King of all Kings, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* – it is a revelation of His absoluteness, “*HaVadai Shemo*” (His Name is absolute), where there can be no room for doubt. There is absoluteness, and there can only be One is absolute – Hashem.

Purim - An End, and a Beginning, of the Festivals

We can see that the festivals begin in the month of Nissan, with Pesach, and they end in the month of Adar, with Purim. Pesach is from the words “*peh sach*”, a “mouth that talks”, which refers to telling over the story of the exodus on Pesach. This is also related to the word Sichon, who was king of “Cheshbon.” This hints to our *avodah* on Pesach to have *cheshbon*, to reflect, into the events of the exodus. “One must see himself as if he is leaving Egypt.”

At the end of the festivals, an entirely new point is revealed. The festivals end with Purim, where “we are still the slaves of Achashveirosh”; we are still within the slavery. Where is our redemption? Here it is revealed that even as we enslaved in exile, we can above the slavery, for we can be above all *avodah* – and from there we can derive our deepest source of vitality (*chiyus*).

Haman wanted to destroy all of the Jews. Simply speaking, his wish was not fulfilled, and instead we were saved from the decree. But there is a concept that if something is written down in any of the books of the Torah, it still continues to exist. How does it still exist? We see this from the obligation on Purim to become intoxicated until one does not know the difference between Haman and Mordechai. It is explained in our holy *sefarim* that the *gematria*^[6] of Haman and Mordechai is the same (502), because when we go above our *daas* on Purim, we are in a perspective where all are equal; where we are above the “chosen nation” status.

When one begins his *avodah*, he starts from Nissan, from Pesach. It takes him 12 months (and in a leap year, 13 months) until he can come to the point of Purim. One begins from the point of “*avodah*” until he reaches the end of the festivals, where he reveals the point where there is “no *avodah*”: he reaches the total *d’veykus* in Hashem, where he is pulled after his root.

But there is also an opposite approach to begin one’s *avodah* with, where the “end is contained in the beginning.” After Purim, the cycle of the year repeats, where it continues until the next year’s Pesach. From this perspective, Pesach\ *avodah* is after the revelation of Purim.

These two different approaches represent two fundamental points in one’s *avodas Hashem*. There is a path of beginning from the month of Nissan, from the festival of Pesach, and ending in the month of Adar, with Purim. This path is to begin from “the world of exchanges”, where there is *avodah*, where there are difficulties to traverse; and it ends at a point that is above thought and *daas* – the point of “*ad d’lo yoda*”, of no *daas*, which is Purim. There is also another path in one’s *avodas Hashem*: for one to begin from Purim, and from there, to enter into *avodah*, which involves *daas*. In this path, where one begins from Purim, he has a gain in that he can now enter into *daas* [during the rest of the year] after having achieved a bond with the Creator [from Purim].

Drawing The Light From Above Onto Our Physical World

Essentially, these two paths represent the exile and the redemption.

In the perspective of our exile, of which Avraham Avinu was told by Hashem that “*it will be surely known to you that your offspring will be strangers in a land that is not theirs...and after this, they will leave with great possessions.*” The Jewish people, which began with Avraham Avinu, begin with servitude. When the exile of Egypt ended, we left the slavery of Pharaoh and instead we became servants with Hashem; we began with servitude and we ended with servitude.

But on Purim, when we accepted the Torah again anew, willingly and out of love for the miracles, the exile of Egypt which led to the giving of the Torah had now reached a higher conclusion. Since the “end is contained in the beginning”, the end of the redemption, which took place on Purim, was a new beginning, which would now lead into “it will surely be known to you that your offspring will be strangers in a land that is not theirs.” The revelation of Purim created an internal overhaul in the soul and in our entire *Avodas Hashem*.

In this point lays the secret of the true redemption. Although “we are still slaves of Achashveirosh”, this is a servitude amidst *d'veykus* to Hashem, and not a servitude to the impure forces. In spite of the fact that we were still under the servitude of Achashveirosh, we experienced a new receiving of the Torah, where we willingly had a reacceptance the Torah.

At Har Sinai, the Jewish people were afraid to hear the Torah from Hashem directly, so they requested instead that Moshe tell it to them. The original acceptance of the Torah was thus through Moshe. But on Purim, when we willingly re-accepted the Torah, it was a higher level. The *gematria* of “Moshe” is 345, and the *gematria* of “ratzon” is 346, which shows us that the acceptance of Torah we had on *Purim*, through our own *ratzon*, was a higher level than the acceptance of the Torah we had through Moshe. Purim was a revelation of a point that was higher than the original acceptance of Torah, and it revealed a deeper point in our *avodah*.

“All of the festivals will cease in the future, except Purim.” Purim is a light of the future. The deeper understanding of the difference between the festivals and Purim is that the festivals are within our exile, of this 6000 year era, and that is why they will cease; whereas Purim was a connection to the light of the World To Come that illuminates This World.

From the simpler perspective, the World To Come is the reward for all of our toil in this current era – as it is implied by the verse, “*Today is for action, and tomorrow is for receiving their reward*” and the statement of Chazal, “One who toils on Erev Shabbos [a reference to This World] will eat on Shabbos [a reference to the World To Come]. From this perspective, the Next World continues from the actions of this current world. But from the inner perspective contained in our *avodah*, it is all turned around (*V'nahafoch Hu*), which creates an entire overhaul in our inner work: A person connects himself to the light of the future, when all “garments” will be removed, and from there he derives his vitality.

Two Paths of Beginning to Connect To The Creator - The Ten Commandments (Torah) and “Ain Od Milvado” (Direct Connection With Hashem)

Let us try to explain this in simpler terms.

At Har Sinai, there were two revelations. There was the giving of the Torah, which began with the Ten Commandments, the roots of the entire Torah. There was also another revelation: Hashem opened up all of the heavens and showed them “*Ain Od Milvado*”, that there is nothing else besides Him. How are these two revelations interconnected?

There are two ways of how a person can connect these two revelations together.

One way is to connect to the Ten Commandments – through deeply connecting to the Torah, a person can reveal Hashem, Who is contained and hidden within the Ten Commandments, His ten “garments.” Using this path, the beginning of one’s *avodah* starts with the Ten Commandments as the roots, and after that, from the rest of 613 *mitzvos* which branch out from there; and after that, to go further into the details of all of the *mitzvos*, until a person covers all of the details of the Torah which is currently in our hands.

Through gathering together all of these details, a person enters into the depth of the Torah, and this

enables a person to have an intimate connection with Hashem, as in the verse, *"Kiss me with the kisses of Your mouth."* In this path, the Creator is revealed through beginning from the Ten Commandments.

But there is also an opposite path than this, where a person first connects himself to Hashem, and as a result, he connects to the Ten Commandments. Hashem is all-inclusive, and since everything is integrated with Him, a person connects to the Ten Commandments by way of connecting himself to Hashem. We find this path used by Avraham Avinu, who "learned Torah from himself", because he recognized that there must be an Owner to all of Creation. He figured out the entire Torah by connecting himself to Hashem. This was the path found by our holy Avos.

After the giving of the Torah, a change took place. We can no longer connect to Hashem without Torah. The Ramban says that the Avos didn't keep certain mitzvos sometimes, because it was before the Torah was given, but after the Torah was given, it is impossible to bypass any of the Torah's laws.

However, there is a point even in our times today where we can access both of these paths at once – both the path of first connecting to Hashem, as well as the path of first connecting to Torah. (We stress "both" here and "at once", because a person is not allowed, *chas v'shalom*, to adapt the exact path of the Avos today and bypass some laws of the Torah). One needs to move back and forth in between these two points: On one hand, to connect to the *"Ain Od Milvado"* aspect, and at the same time, to connect to the Ten Commandments which were given by Hashem.

For a few moments, in one's own soul, he can connect to either of these two revelations, and keep moving back and forth between these two points.

The Secret of Purim and Our Soul's Inner Redemption

When Avraham Avinu was told by Hashem *"It will be surely be known to you"*, this usage of "knowledge", *daas*, was an allusion to how the exile of Egypt would rectify the sin of Adam HaRishon with the *Eitz HaDaas*. The way of *daas* is that a person takes his natural desire for knowledge and he uses his mental powers for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, by making his own intellect subservient to Him, until he eventually comes to nullify his sense of self, which enables him to achieve a full bond with the Creator. But this is a long and difficult path, and only a few individuals can get far with it. Is there an alternate route to take than this?

That is the secret of Purim! The secret of this day is to show us that there is an entirely different path to take in our *avodah*. Consider the following. When a person gets up in the morning, he must say *Modeh Ani*. Why is this the first thing a person must do every day? Shouldn't he instead think in learning (according to the opinions that thinking about Torah doesn't require a blessing over the Torah)?

It is because there is a whole different source where our soul derives spiritual vitality from. *Modeh Ani* implies that the very first thought of a person's day should be about the Creator. It is permissible to think about Hashem before a person has made the blessing over Torah? We know without a doubt that it is permissible. Why? It is because a thought about Hashem is part of our essence. Something which is a part of our intrinsic existence doesn't need a blessing beforehand in order for us to access it.

One should examine himself deeply and see what he is mainly searching for. Does he mainly seek understanding and clarification of things? Or does he mainly seek *emunah peshutah* in Hashem?

This matter is the core that lies at the secret of the "redemption of the soul." It is clear that all of the "exile" which our soul experiences, is only possible when there is a lack of a simple connection to

Hashem; when the soul of a person hasn't been trained to remember Hashem throughout the day. Just as we remember our hands and feet throughout the day, because they are a simple reality, so do we need to remember Hashem throughout the day, Whose reality is no less than these simple realities.

Without remembering Hashem throughout the day, one's Torah learning is only within his *daas*, and he can only begin his *avodah* from Pesach and Shavuot, which was the beginning of receiving the Torah – but it was an acceptance of Torah that didn't involve our own will....

The Torah which we accepted again on Purim, which was done willingly, is “the end that is contained in the beginning.” Therefore, our *avodah* needs to begin with Purim – and not to end there. That is how the cycle is really supposed to look like [from the inner perspective]. (The Hebrew word for “cycle” is “*maagal*”, from the word “*igul*”, “circle” – because in a circle, the end is the beginning.)

The Torah is so vast, and it is simple to anyone that we are all very limited in covering all of its depth. How, then, can a person truly connect to Hashem's Torah? How can a limited human being, with the limitations of the human intellect, connect himself to the Torah that is Hashem's wisdom?

It is because we need to nurse forth the Torah from Hashem, and not from our own minds. **What does it mean to nurse the Torah from Hashem? It is by realizing what Chazal say of one who sits and learns Torah: Hashem sits next to a person and learns with him!!**

When you learn with a *chavrusa*, you don't forget easily that someone is learning with you. Hashem is also called the “*chavrusa*” of a person (so to speak)!

Nursing Forth The Torah Directly From Hashem

These are not words of *mussar* or inspiration. Rather, it is describing reality as it is.

All people endure suffering. There is no one who doesn't suffer. What is the root of all suffering? It all stems from confusion. This world is called *olam*, from the word *he'elam*, “confusion”. Even the Torah that we mainly have today is not a clearly understood Torah to us. The *Gemara* which we learn is called “*Talmud Bavli*”, it was composed in Bavel (Babylonia), which is from the word *bilbul*, “confusion.” This is explained in our *sefarim*.

But when a person connects himself to the Creator, in spite of the fact that he is walking in a world of darkness, “*For as I sit in the dark, Hashem is a light to me*”. He will have a light of clarity amidst of all the darkness and confusion of this world. By the miracle of Purim, there was *orah v'simchah*, “light and joy” to the Jews, and the Sages say that the “light” here refers to the Torah. In other words, because they had a willing acceptance of the Torah at this time, they accessed the true light of the Torah. Without the “light” of Torah, a person is missing this “light” in his Torah learning and he gropes around in the darkness.

One must make an inner clarification in himself, and there is no other clarification like it: We must access the source in which we can nurse forth a spiritual vitality directly from Hashem. When a person is connected with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, he will be able to comprehend areas of Torah in one moment, which would take another person seventy years to work on understanding! This is because he is not trying to nurse forth understanding in Torah from his own limited human intellect, and instead, he is deriving his understanding from an unlimited Source – from the Creator.

There is no other secret to life, than this. The one and only secret in our life is: learning the Torah can be a path to get to the Creator.

That is all true when we work with the lower path, where we work our way upwards (“*m’tata l’eila*” – “from the bottom up”), but we have explained here that there is an alternative path, where we work our way downwards (“*m’leila l’tata*” – “from the top towards the bottom), which is when we arrive at understanding in Torah from directly connecting to the Creator. In actuality, we need to integrate these two paths together, by moving from the Creator to the Torah, and from the Torah to the Creator, and back and forth between these two points. This must become the ongoing cycle of our life, and in this way, we integrate the exile and the redemption at once. This is the meaning of “*My soul is close to her redemption*”.

The prophet says that in the era after the redemption, the world will become filled with knowledge of Hashem, and there will not even be a need for people to teach anyone. This is because it will be a time in which a person will not derive his knowledge from his own human intellect, and not either from the intellect of others - only from the source, Hashem.

Making This Concept Practical: Bringing Hashem Into Our Day-To-Day Life

Practically speaking, everyone should take with him this inner point to live with. This inner point is to train our souls to think about the Creator of the world, and from there, we can derive forth the power to have good *middos*, to have a good *davening*, and to understand Torah. In every part of our life, we need to bring Hashem into it. This is how we attain the direct connection to Hashem.

At first, this will be difficult. But we all await the complete redemption, and we ask for it daily in *Shemoneh Esrei*. Therefore, we need to prepare for the time of the redemption, when the *Beis HaMikdash* will be built and Mashiach ben Dovid will come. Through preparing for it properly, that itself will be the redemption!

(On the day that the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed, Mashiach is born. At the very time of destruction, when Hashem is tearing His garments (as the Sages describe it), there is also revelation taking place. This shows us how opposite concepts can unite: mourning (destruction and Purim are one at their root, for both of them reveal Mashiach.)

We must know clearly the outcome of all these words here. If we walk away with just this one simple point – that everything needs to be derived from Hashem – this perspective will create an overhaul in our lives. When a person is about to learn Torah, he can try to devote at least two minutes for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* – we’re not talking about an hour, we’re talking about just two minutes -and **just think about HaKadosh Baruch Hu!** Think that the Torah comes from Him, and that He sits and learns with a person as he’s learning.

Transforming Your Purim - And Your Life

We need to bring this knowledge into our day-to-day living: to live with the Creator. Without this, a person will remain the same just as he was before Purim, whether it is Purim or whether it’s after Purim.

We have all gone through many Purims, and Mashiach isn’t here yet. Why hasn’t he come yet? Is it only because others are at fault...? What is the truth? What will bring the general redemption, and what will bring a private redemption?

Every person here *Baruch Hashem* has the three pillars in his life upon which the world stands on: Torah, *avodah* [prayer] and *gemilus chassadim* (kindness). But one must know of Whom is supporting all of these pillars in his life: it is the Creator of the world. It is not enough to know about this subconsciously. We need to reveal this point into our conscious awareness.

Without a shadow of a doubt, there is no way to arrive at the redemption without the light that Purim reveals. This is the light of Purim! All we need to do is to clarify within ourselves if we are truly turning our minds to think about Hashem.

These are not words of *mussar* - this is reality! This is the very reality of a human being.

We are approaching the day of Purim. Everyone wants to outstretch his hand and receive from Hashem, reflecting the *halachah* on Purim that "Anyone who stretches forth his hand, must be given to." But what is it that we are seeking? If a person does not prepare himself as he should, in order to receive the light of this day of Purim, how will he receive it?! If he does prepare himself to receive the light of the day of Purim, it means that he has resolved on Purim, from this day onward, to change the entire way he has been living.

There is a well-known teaching that "*Yom HaKippurim*" is called so because it is *ki'purim*, it is "like Purim", implying that there is a resemblance between Yom Kippur and Purim. The connection between Yom Kippur and Purim is that just as Yom Kippur is a day of *teshuvah*, to "return" - and to "return" means to accept a new kind of "movement" which the person hadn't been taking until now. When a person is going in one direction and then he turns back, he is forging a new movement and a new direction for himself.

The secret of doing "*teshuvah* on Purim" is to reveal that our *avodas Hashem* does not go from Pesach until Purim [from Torah to Hashem], but from Purim to Pesach [from Hashem to Torah]. This is the secret of *teshuvah*: to "return" the movements which we are familiar with and which we are used to from the rest of the year, and to instead receive a new kind of movement. Then we can soar higher and higher, and connect to the plane that is beyond all movement.

If a person makes sure to clarify, within himself, of what the light of the day of Purim is, what the essence of this day is, and as a result, he makes a firm decision to completely "turn around" his life and to live differently - he has truly "outstretched" his hand on Purim, and he will receive an entirely new hand from Hashem that can receive new things. But if a person doesn't try to clarify to himself what Purim should mean for him, then he can be compared *chas v'shalom* to a person who turns over his hand when someone tries to give him *tzedakah*...

In Conclusion

May Hashem help us prepare ourselves to become a proper vessel that can contain the light of the day of Purim, and may the light of the Creator shine completely in the heart of each Jew, and may we merit speedily the general redemption as well to all of *Klal Yisrael* and the entire world.

[1] Beraishis 9:20

[2] Koheles 12:1

[3] Chagigah 3b

[4] רצונו לראות את מלכנו "It is our desire to see our King"

[5] Megillah 14a

[6] numerical value in Hebrew

פורים 005 - ראש לכל המועדים | ספר **בלבבי משכן אבנה פורים** - עמ' פג - צד, **וספר**
בלבבי משכן אבנה ח"ו פרק יז

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/purim-005-head-holidays>