

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 22

פרשת תצוה תשע"ה

Purim

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The Kedusha of the Day

The Zohar notes that *Purim* is similar to *Yom HaKippurim*. This means that what is accomplished on *Purim* by rejoicing can be accomplished on *Kippurim* ("like *Purim*"), implies that *Purim* is the greater *Yom-Tov*, impacting a person more powerfully.

Indeed, *Chazal* teach that when *Moshiach* comes, all the *Yomim-Tovim* will cease to exist; only the *Yom-Tov* of *Purim* will remain. *Chassidus* explains that the *simcha* and *kedusha* of *Purim* are so great, that even when we have the *simcha* and *kedusha* of the *geulah*, *Purim* will still be special.

(תיקוני זוהר נ"ז ע"ב, מדרש משלי פ"ט, ת"מ חט"ז ע"י 118 ושינ)

The author of **Chiddushei HaRim**, the first **Rebbe of Ger**, illustrated the powerful potential of *Purim* with a story:

There was once a *Yid* who set out on a journey, intending to commit a grievous sin, and took along five hundred gold rubles that he had patiently amassed over the years. On his way, he suddenly heard the heartfelt cries of a family in distress. They were being evicted for not paying their rent. His pity aroused, he gave them all the money that he had intended to use for the *aveira*.

His deed aroused such a great tumult in *Shamayim* that it was decided that whatever this man would decree, would materialize. However, to ensure that the privilege would not be misused, it was ordained that he become a drunkard.

Some time later, a terrible *tzara* descended upon the world. The **Baal Shem Tov** sent his *talmidim* to beg this drunken *Yid* to intercede and ask HaShem for mercy. They repeatedly found him drunk, until finally, catching him sober, they presented their request and he succeeded in abolishing the decree.

The *Chiddushei Harim* would conclude: *Purim* is a day of *eis ratzon*, when every *Yid* – like that drunkard – can accomplish great things, without limitation. However, to allow this to happen, one must make sure that the

merrymaking will not interfere with this mighty potential.

(שפתי צדיק אות נ"ג)

In the Old Country, it was the custom in many communities to celebrate *Purim* by appointing make-believe *rabbonim*, policemen, judges and other important public figures. One year in *Ziditchov*, the townspeople chose **Reb Koppel** (the nephew of the *tzaddik*, **Reb Tzvi of Ziditchov**) to be governor, and he in turn chose some of his fellow *chassidim* to act as his advisers.

On *Purim* day, that entire band of masqueraders first drank *LeChayim* and then marched off to the *tzaddik's* house, filled with lively spirits. *Reb Tzvi* treated the young "governor" with great respect, and asked him to remove the candle and meat tax that the government had recently imposed. The lively "governor" agreed, but when he was asked to repeal the army draft on the Jewish boys, he refused. No amount of begging, pleading or threatening could make him change his mind, and the *tzaddik* left the room in anger.

The following day, when the effects of the spirits had worn off, and fellow *chassidim* told *Reb Koppel* of what had happened the previous day, he had no recollection of it. In fact, he could barely believe the story.

Later that year, the *chassidim* realized what had occurred on *Purim* – for the candle and meat taxes were in fact removed, but the draft remained enforced.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 300)

The Joy of Purim

We read in the *Gemara* that on *Purim* one must drink "until he cannot differentiate (*ad d'lo yada*)" between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordechai'."

The goal of *ad d'lo yada* (literally, "until he does not know...") is that a person reach a level of utter subservience to HaShem, which is not limited by his own understanding, and through this, all undesirable perspectives will be washed away. As a result, one will have the strength to

continue this *avoda* throughout the entire year.

(מגילה ז, ב, לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1277)

The **Lubavitcher Rebbe** zy"ta taught: It is obvious that we must distance ourselves entirely from anything negative ("cursed be Haman"), and seek to treasure and embrace all good things ("blessed be Mordechai"). That applies at any time. The unique aspect of *Purim* is that we can accomplish this by allowing our *neshama* to express itself freely. This kind of *avoda* is superior to serving HaShem by means of conscious thought (*yada*). Indeed, in this kind of *avoda* we can resemble the *Yidden* at the time of the *Purim* story who, when the inner power of their *neshamos* surfaced, fulfilled all the *mitzvos* faithfully, even to the point of *mesiras nefesh*.

(לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1280)

The *Megillah* says that after the miracle of *Purim*, the *Yidden* were blessed with *simcha* ("joy"), which *Chazal* understand to mean that they were now able to celebrate the *Yomim-Tovim*. Although *goyim* also have holidays, they celebrate them with drinking and unbridled conduct. *Yidden*, by contrast, even when they rejoice and drink they become closer to HaShem, and heighten their *yiras Shamayim* and their *kedusha*.

(לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 920, ח"ד ע' 1274, וראה שו"ע סי' רצ"ב סי' ג)

Consider This

Is the merrymaking on *Purim* a source of *brachos* or a distraction from it?

How does one rejoice on *Purim* in a way that brings him closer to HaShem?

Sparks of Greatness

Chidah - ג' אדר

Reb Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai is known as the **Chida**. He was a great *posek*, a *mekubal*, a *shadar* (collector of funds) who travelled the world, and a great historian. He wrote over 100 *seforim* on a wide range of topics, many of which are published. He was a *talmid* of the *Or Hachaim Hakadosh*. He was born in 1724 - ה'תפ"ד and passed away in Livorno, Italy on the 11th of Adar, 1806 - ה'תקס"ו.

The *Medrash* says that even if this is the only merit that they have, for this alone they are worthy of being redeemed. The *Chida* explains that this is the meaning of the words in davening, "את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח..." כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום. We are asking Hashem to send us *Moshiach* immediately, and to the possible argument that we are undeserving, we say, "Because we hope for your salvation all day," implying that as a

reward for awaiting *Moshiach*, we deserve to be redeemed.

It is told, in the name of **Reb Yehoshua Rokeiach of Belz**, that the *Chida* once asked a man from Chevron to accompany and serve him on one of his travels to serve him. During their journey, the man passed away. The *Chida* was very upset, for now he would be returning to Chevron without the man, and he had left as a healthy, strong individual. Suddenly, as he was thinking this, the man reappeared and began doing his job just as before. He accompanied the *Chida* until they reached Chevron. There too, the man carried on as before, until the first Friday night of their return. Then the *Chida* raised his hand heavenward, facing the servant, and called out, "Dai! Dai! Dai! (Enough! enough! enough!)" And the man vanished.

Library Sparks

This week's Torah portion, *Tetzave*, describes the special garments worn by the high priest during his service in the Holy Temple, and enumerates eight separate items of clothing.

The Torah makes two provisos: First, the high priest may not perform his service unless he is wearing all eight garments, and second, he is not allowed to even enter the Sanctuary unless he is wearing three of them -- the breastplate, *ephod*, and robe.

The high priest is the emissary and representative of the Jewish people, and as such, his function is to connect them to G-d.

The relationship between the Jew and G-d exists on two levels simultaneously: One is the result of the Jew's service through Torah and mitzvot, the other stems from the Jew's innate connection with G-d by virtue of his essence. Both levels are reflected in the Torah's instructions concerning the high priest's garments.

Set into the breastplate were twelve precious stones, each inscribed with the name of a different tribe, which the high priest was required to wear "upon his heart." The breastplate therefore symbolizes the highest level of connection between the Jew and G-d, as these names were actually inscribed on the holy object itself.

The next level of the Jew's bond with G-d is expressed in the *ephod*, which also contained stones inscribed with the names of the tribes, but with a difference: The stones of the *ephod* were

not worn "opposite the heart" but rather, "upon the shoulder - pieces," in the back of the garment.

The *ephod* therefore symbolizes those Jews who wage a constant war against their Evil Inclination, a type of service of G-d that falls into the category of "back."

The third level is expressed in the high priest's robe, the hem of which was adorned with "pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarn."

Our Sages commented that even the most estranged Jew is as full of *mitzvos* as a pomegranate; the *ephod* therefore symbolizes this level.

The high priest must wear all three garments -- representing all three levels of Jews -- if he is to be allowed into the Sanctuary, the place where the Divine Presence rests. For it is when all Jews stand together in unity that the deepest bond with G-d is forged -- "a remembrance before the L-rd continually."

This contains a lesson for us to apply in our lives:

Every single Jew is an essential part of the Jewish people and is therefore a "remembrance before the L-rd continually."

For the true essence of the Jew is not his external appearance but his G-dly soul, "a veritable part of G-d," and all Jews are children of the same Father.

Halacha Sparks

Matonos Lo'evyonim

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

What is the optimal way to perform the mitzvah of matonos lo'evyonim?

The *mitzvah* of *matonos lo'evyonim* is to give a gift to two needy individuals. The gift should consist of something that the receiver can benefit from on Purim, such as money or food.

The *Mishneh Brura* quotes the *Ritva* that two *prutos* are sufficient to fulfill the *mitzvah* (in US currency that would be less than ten cents). However, many *poskim* hold that one must give at least enough to cover the cost of a meal. The size of this meal is subject to further debate among *poskim*.

Although one fulfils the obligation of *matonos lo'evyonim* by giving a small sum to two people, the *Rambam* writes: It is preferable to spend more on *matonos lo'evyonim* than on the Purim *seudah* and *mishloach monos*, because there is no greater and more beautiful *simcha* than to gladden the hearts of the poor.

One may not use *maaser* money for the actual *mitzvah* of *matonos lo'evyonim*, but it is permissible to use *maaser* to give to additional needy people. On Purim, one should not examine the worthiness of the *tzedakah* cause, rather donate to anyone who requests.

One who will not encounter needy people on Purim, should appoint an agent who will give on his behalf, either in person or by phone. If for whatever reason this is unfeasible on Purim itself, the consensus of *poskim* is that one should donate before Purim in a manner that the poor people will receive it on Purim. However, if that was not taken care of before Purim and one does not know of any needy people and can't appoint an agent, one should set aside an amount on Purim to be distributed it after Purim.

Matonos lo'evyonim can be given to anyone who doesn't have a steady income that is sufficient for his and his family's basic needs, and doesn't own assets which he is able to sell, other than items for his and his family's personal use such as a home and household wares. One can also give to someone who has an income but doesn't have the resources with which to pay for an exceptional expense such as a medical problem or making a wedding.

שו"ע או"ח סי' תרצד, מ"א בשם השל"ה, מ"ב שם, ש"ת סק"א, כ"ה חיים סק"ז, פתחי תשובה שם, צנפת פנח הל' מגילה ע' לה, שו"ת קנין תורה ח"ג סי' קג, שו"ת מהר"י אסאד סי' רז, שו"ת חלקת יעקב ח"א סי' קב, שו"ע יו"ד סי' רנג ס"א, צדקה ומשפט (בלוי) פ"ב ס"ב-ס"א.

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