

# Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

## Is Purim About Drinking or Giving?

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי  
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

The Rambam writes, “It is better for a person to increase his gifts to the poor rather than increase his Seudah and Shaloch Manos, because there is no greater joy and pride than gladdening the hearts of the poor, orphans, widows, and converts. This is because one who gladdens the hearts of these downtrodden people is like the Shechinah, as the Pasuk says, “To give life to the lowly spirit and to give life to the lowly heart.”

An important insight into the Simcha that we feel when we give to others who are downtrodden can be derived from this Rambam. It seems that this Simcha is not just an emotional or social feeling of joy because I made someone feel good. It is rather something much greater, it is a spiritual pleasure, because in this act I am acting like Hashem, and I feel the Shechinah within me. This is the root of what makes people feel good when they uplift a downtrodden person.

This insight into the understanding of the joy we feel when we uplift others can help motivate us to pursue opportunities where we can accomplish this. If we realize that through soothing the hearts of the brokenhearted we will be experiencing our own greatness of being like Hashem, we will be motivated to engage in this as much as possible. This thought is especially relevant as we head into Purim, where so much of the Avodah of the day is to be B'Simcha. We see from this Rambam that if we want to experience Purim to the max it is not about drinking, but giving. This thought is further enhanced by the Kol Bo who implies that the whole purpose of the drinking is so that we will be able to uplift the hearts of the downtrodden.

### A Thought To Help Us Be Mekabel The Torah On Purim

We know that one of the most important themes on Purim is the Kabbalas Hatorah that took place. On Har Sinai they accepted the Torah by force, but on Purim they accepted it willingly. The Avudraham in his commentary of Ahavah Rabbah shares with us an insight that can help us renew our own Kabbalas Hatorah on Purim and beyond. In Ahavah Rabbah we say, “For the sake of our fathers that trusted in you, that you taught them the statutes of life, so should you have Chaninah on us, and teach us.” The Avudraham comments and says that the Bitachon is referring to Klal Yisrael following Hashem into the desert, and the word “Chaninah” is an expression to Hashem, that just like you had Chaninah for our fathers and you taught them the Torah, so should you do for us.”

We know that the word Chaninah refers to a free gift that we don't deserve. The question is, if Klal Yisrael had such Bitachon why would they need Chaninah to be given the Torah, they had such a tremendous Zechus? We see from here that the Torah is a gift that a human being is not worthy of receiving, and we can only receive it through Hashem's kindness of giving us a free gift. This idea illustrates for us how great the Torah is and how privileged we are to have received it. This idea also applies to knowledge and forgiveness, as the word Chaninah is also used when asking Hashem for these in Shemoneh Esrei.

This perspective can help us be Mekabel the Torah. When we realize how great of a gift the Torah is, that no Zechus could entitle us to it, we will be inspired to be Mekabel the Torah, and **commit to learning it. We will appreciate how privileged and fortunate we are to be part of Klal**

**Yisrael.**



## Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

After the reading of Megillas Esther we recite the piyut of Shoshanas Yaakov:

“The rose of Yaakov thrilled with joy and exulted when they beheld Mordechai garbed in royal blue. You were their salvation forever, their hope in every generation, to make known that all who trust in You shall not be shamed, nor shall all those who place hope in You be disgraced forever.”

The “rose of Yaakov” refers to Klal Yisroel as they are referred to in Shir HaShirim (2:2): As a rose among the thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters. One may ask: Throughout Tanach, Klal Yisroel is referred to in many ways, why specifically in the context of the story of Purim are they referred to as a rose.

Through understanding why Klal Yisroel is referred to as a rose perhaps we can answer our question. The following is the explanation of the Seforno: “As a rose only grows among the thorns, so is my beloved Klal Yisroel among the daughters, the nations of the world - for that is the only way they will turn to me as the Pasuk states, ‘Hashem, in pain we remembered you.’”

The Gemara states: “If the Jewish people repent, they are redeemed, and if not they are not redeemed. Rav Yehoshua said to him: If they do not repent, will they not be redeemed at all? Rather, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will establish a king for them whose decrees are as harsh as those issued by Haman, and the Jewish people will have no choice but to repent, and this will restore them to the right path.”

The redemption from the Jewish nation’s Babylonian exile was in fact through the story of Purim, where Haman’s terrible decrees led Klal Yisroel to Teshuva as the Pasuk states: “And in every province, wherever the king’s orders and his edict reached, there was great mourning for the Jews, and fasting and weeping and lamenting; sackcloth and ashes were put on the most prominent.” Perhaps for this reason in the piyut of Shoshanas Yaakov when referring to their redemption we say: “The rose of Yaakov thrilled with joy and exulted when they beheld Mordechai garbed in royal blue!”



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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After the sin of Klal Yisroel at Achashverosh’s feast, the Midrash recounts a poignant scene: “The Torah draped itself in mourning garments and wept aloud; Malachim joined in the lament, questioning, ‘Master of the world, if Klal Yisroel is erased, what purpose do we serve?’ In response, the sun and moon dimmed their light. Elyahu HaNavi hurried to the Avos and Moshe Rabbeinu, pleading, ‘Why do you slumber while your descendants suffer?’ The Avos acknowledged the transgression but questioned what could be done, given the sealed decree.”

Klal Yisroel embarked on repentance; even children fasted and cried to Hashem for three days. Yet, the decree seemed immutable. What turned the tide? The Midrash offers insight into Esther’s prayer before facing Achashverosh: “Hashem, G-d of Israel, sovereign since time’s dawn, aid Your servant! An orphan, destitute, I beseech mercy, likening myself to a beggar at Achashverosh’s door. Grant success, rescue Your flock from the foe. Your salvation knows no bounds. Stand by this trusting orphan before this man!”

The world teetered on the brink; Klal Yisroel, Malachim, and even children beseeched Hashem. Esther’s plea highlighted trust in His kindness, transcending even celestial decrees. “Stand by this orphan who trusted in Your kindness!” For even a decree that can stand in the way of all the Heavens and Earth cannot stand in the way of bitachon! Despite risking her life by entering uninvited, she found favor in the king’s eyes, a testament to Hashem’s mercy toward His faithful.

Perhaps this is why Klal Yisroel says every year upon completion of the Megillah reading in the prayer of Shoshanas Yaakov:

You were their salvation for eternity and their hope in every generation. To proclaim that all who await Your salvation will not be shamed and those who take shield under You will not be shamed forever!