

Darkei HaChizuk

ארבעה צריכים חיוזק (ברכות לב:) - שיתחזק אדם בהם תמיד בכל כחו (רש"י)

A Sichah from Maran HaGaon Rav Gershon Edelstein *shlita*, Rosh Yeshivas Ponevez • Parashas Tetzaveh 5781

431

משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה

How to Increase Simchah

Chazal tell us (*Taanis* 29a): *Mishenichnas Adar, marbin b'simchah*, When Adar enters, we increase joy." Let us contemplate how to do so, and what "*marbin b'simchah*" means. Of course, it certainly doesn't mean to increase "*stam*" joy, as there is no point to this. It means to increase *simchah shel mitzvah*, to increase the joy in fulfilling mitzvos. Let us discuss how to go about doing so.

Making a *siyum* on a *masechta* is *simchah shel mitzvah*, but there's a limit to how many *siyums* one can make. A person learns what he likes to learn, so how many *siyums* can he make in Adar? If so, how can one increase joy?

Then there's also *simchah* when purchasing a new garment or eating a new fruit — when we recite the *berachah* of *shehecheyanu*. This is *simchah* with a *berachah*, so this too is *simchah shel mitzvah*, for the joy causes you to perform a mitzvah: to recite a *berachah* out of joy.

Simchah in Every Single Mitzvah

The truth is every mitzvah a person does involves *simchah*. For example, when he washes his hands, he is doing the mitzvah of *netillas yadayim*, and when he recites the words: Who has sanctified us with His mitzvos and commanded us about the washing of the hands, this is another mitzvah and there's inherent joy in this act, for he has just fulfilled two mitzvos: the actual act is a mitzvah, and the *berachah* is another mitzvah. Then he goes to eat and recites "*hamotzi*," this is another *berachah* and mitzvah. These are all reasons to be happy — he's doing a mitzvah, and mitzvos bring joy

Regarding *tefillah*, as well, there is joy in davening. The *Mesillas Yesharim* writes (Chapter 19) in the name of the Midrash: "When you pray, your heart should be joyous that you are praying before an unrivaled King." The fact we are *zocheh* to daven before such a King is a reason to be happy. This King has no match, and this King wants to hear our prayers, He longs for and desires our *tefillos*, as Chazal say (*Yevamos* 64a), "HaKadosh Baruch Hu desires the prayers of the righteous."

Esek haTorah is also a mitzvah and also brings about *simchah*, as the *pasuk* states (*Tehillim* 19:9), "Hashem's commandments are straight, causing the heart joy."

When Does Torah Restore the Soul?

In the previous *pasuk* (verse 8) it states, "Hashem's Torah is perfect, the testimony of Hashem is trustworthy, making the simple one wise." The Midrash relates (*Yalkut Tehillim* 774), "When is it *temimah*, perfect? When it comes out of the mouth of a *tamim*, a perfect one. When is it trustworthy? When it comes out of the mouth of a *ne'eman*, a trustworthy person's mouth." That is, the Torah is called "*temimah*" when the person learning it is on the *madreigah* of a *tamim*. Avraham Avinu was called *tamim* (*Bereishis* 17:1): "Walk before me and be *tamim*." Another *pasuk* exhorts every Jew to be *tamim* (*Devarim* 18:13). When a person learning Torah has this level of *emunah*, his Torah is "*temimah*," and then it is *meshivas nefesh*, it restores his soul and has a *hashpa'ah* on him.

Likewise, regarding the second half of that *pasuk*: "the testimony of Hashem is *ne'emanah*, trustworthy, making the simple one wise," the question is: when is it "*ne'emanah*?" When the person learning it is on the level of "*ne'eman*," as the *pasuk* states about Avraham Avinu (*Nechemia* 9:8): "And You found his heart *ne'eman* before You." This too is a *madreigah* of *emunah* — and when one's *emunah* is on this level, his Torah is "trustworthy" and it "makes the simple one wise."

We learn from here that these two concepts depend on a person *madreigah*. One must be on the level of "*tamim*" and "*ne'eman*" to merit them.

Torah Brings Joy on Every Madreigah

Following this vein, we can explain the next *pasuk*: When do the mitzvos bring joy? When they are *yashar*, "straight, upright." And when are they upright? When they come out of the mouth of an upright person. "*Yashar*" is another *madreigah*, though it is on a lesser level than *ne'eman*, "trustworthy," as explained in *Avos*, chap. 6 in the mishnah discussing one who learns Torah *lishmah*: "It trains him to be *tzaddik*, *chassid*, *yashar*, *v'ne'eman*, righteous, pious, upright, trustworthy." *Yashar* is mentioned prior to *ne'eman*,

because *ne'eman* is one level above *yashar*, but *yashar* is a lofty *madreigah* as well — it's higher than *tzaddik* and *chassid*. (See *Ruach Chaim* on *Avos* ad loc. for his explanation of these *madreigos*.) In the Shacharis prayers, we say: *V'yatziv, v'nachon, v'kayum, v'yashar, v'ne'eman*. We mention *yashar* before *ne'eman* here as well.

The level of *misamchei lev* is a high level of *simchah*, and one must fill the condition of “*yashar*” to merit this level. But *divrei Torah* cause rejoicing regardless of a person's level! There's just a difference regarding the level of joy, but Torah learning causes joy, and one is joyous when he is *osek baTorah*, because it is interesting, captivating, and brings joy.

Increasing the Madreigah of Simchah

This joy refers to when a person is happy due to *esek haTorah* and mitzvah fulfillment. That's the joy that's present all year round. Every day of the year, we are joyous with the joy of mitzvah observance, and “*Mishenichnas Adar marbin b'simchah*” means that the level of joy in Adar increases. In Adar, the *simchah shel mitzvah* is greater and stronger than it is throughout the year.

The reason for this seems to be that since Adar is a time of joy, and Purim falls out during Adar, and on Purim we reaccepted the Torah out of love, with joy. As a result, it is possible for the *madreigah* of *simchah* to be greater. So this is what “*marbin b'simchah*” means: The *simchah* we constantly have throughout the year will be maximized, it will be on a higher level.

Rabbeinu Yonah wrote the following (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 4:9) about *simchah shel mitzvah*: “The reward for fulfilling mitzvos with joy will grow and flourish greatly.” The joy in mitzvah is a tremendous merit itself, seemingly even greater than the actual mitzvah.

This is because the joy is the result of realizing the importance of the mitzvah; that's why it makes him happy. It comes from an inner recognition of the importance of the mitzvah and the One Who commanded us to fulfill it — and that's why he's happy. This is *kevod Shamayim*.

Madreigos of Simchah shel Mitzvah

The truth is, there are a number of levels when a person does a mitzvah and is happy to do it: what makes him happy, and what is the *simchah shel mitzvah*. It could simply be because he knows he'll receive Olam HaBa for it. Chazal say (*Pesachim* 8a): “One who says this coin is for tzedakah so that my son will live, or so that I will merit Olam HaBa, he is a complete *tzaddik*.” If he is fulfilling the mitzvos solely to gain Olam HaBa he is still a complete *tzaddik*, but he is merely a *tzaddik*, and not a *chassid*, since he is doing the mitzvah for his personal benefit. He is thinking about himself and doing it for his own gain; this is not a perfect *madreigah*.

The Ramban writes in *Parashas Acharei Mos* (*Vayikra* 18:4) on the *pasuk* “Fulfill My laws... which man will do and he will live through them.” Onkelos writes: “Through them he will live to Eternal life.” Meaning, “and he will live through them” refers to Olam HaBa, which one merits through mitzvah observance. The Ramban writes that there are various *madreigos* in Olam Haba, and the level each person merits all depends on his intent when he fulfilled the mitzvah.

He writes there that if a person fulfills the mitzvos in order to merit Olam HaBa, he will be saved from “the judgment of the wicked, and his soul will rest in goodness” — he will receive Olam HaBa, but it will not be a high level. Since he fulfilled the mitzvos to receive Olam HaBa, he is only a “complete *tzaddik*,” he isn't on a higher level. There are higher levels than *tzaddik*, as is delineated in the *mishnah* in *Avos* that we mentioned. The *madreigos* start with “*tzaddik*,” then “*chassid, yashar, ne'eman*,” and all the other *madreigos* mentioned there.

If so, the joy one experiences because he's excited about gaining Olam HaBa is not a perfect *madreigah*; there are loftier *madreigos* than this — such as when one does a mitzvah to bring *kevod Shamayim*, to rejoice in *kevod Shamayim*! The purpose of the entire Creation is to bring about *kevod Shamayim*, as the *mishnah* at the end of *Pirkei Avos* states: “Whatever Hashem created in His world, He created only for His glory, as it says, ‘Everyone that is called by My name, and whom I created for My glory, I formed him, yes I made him.’” All the worlds, Bri'ah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, were created to bring about *kevod Shamayim*. If a person fulfills mitzvos for *kevod Shamayim* and is happy bring glory to Hashem's name, this is a perfect *madreigah*. **And that's where *marbin b'simchah* comes in: A person can “increase *simchah*” because there are so many levels of joy. In Adar, one can reach even a higher *madreigah* of *simchah shel mitzvah* than he can all year round; his joy should be for bringing about *kevod Shamayim*!**

Joy in Physical Acts L'shem Shamayim

Chazal say (*Avos* 2:12), “And may all your deeds be for the sake of Heaven.” The Rambam (*Hilchos Dei'os* 3:3) explains that if a person carries out all his physical needs for the sake of Heaven, then anything he does is *avodas Hashem*. He adds that even his sleep can be *avodas Hashem*, if he has in mind that he's sleeping in order to gain strength to serve Hashem and fulfill all 613 mitzvos *b'shleimus* on the following day. If he has this mindset, then his sleep is *avodas Hashem*.

When a person does physical acts *l'shem Shamayim*, the type of “*l'shem Shamayim*” and the purpose he has in mind is also a factor. The ultimate *avodas Hashem* is when he performs actions not in order to gain Olam HaBa, but solely to bring honor and glory to Hashem's name.

The Rambam discusses sleep, which is a passive act, a *shev v'al ta'aseh*, so all the more so when a person eats *l'shem*

Shamayim, to maintain his health — which is active, *kum v'aseh* — he is serving Hashem then too. Eating to satisfy one's desires, however, is the yetzer hara at work. But eating to stay healthy — **and not simply for health reasons, but in order to have strength to serve Hashem** — is serving Hashem, just as the Rambam wrote regarding sleep.

So when a person sits down to eat, not only is he happy that he's performing a mitzvah by washing his hands, and reciting *berachos*, the actual act of eating is also *avodas Hashem*, and it's another good reason for *simchah shel mitzvah*!

Chazal say (*Yoma* 71a), "One who wants to bring *yayin nesech* on the *mizbeach* should fill the throats of *talmidei chachamim* with wine." When this *talmid chacham* eats and drinks, he has in mind for it to be *l'shem Shamayim*, so when a person gives him wine, it's considered as if he performed *nisuch hayayin*. Since the *talmid chacham* is serving Hashem through his food and drink, it's comparable to *nisuch hayayim* on the *mizbeach*.

So too the *Mesillas Yesharim* writes (chap. 1) that someone whose actions are all *l'shem Shamayim* and "uses this world solely to assist him in his *avodas Hashem*," then "he rises and the world rises along with him." He cites Chazal's statement (*Chullin* 91b) about the stones that Yaakov placed around his head: "To teach us that they all joined together as one, for each stone said: The tzaddik shall rest his head upon me." Since Yaakov Avinu slept *l'shem Shamayim*, when he uses a stone to protect him as he sleeps, it becomes sanctified. It is now something used for *avodas Hashem*. And so, all the stones wanted to be beneath his head, in order to rise in *madreigah* and become sanctified.

The Obligation Is Greater in Adar

If so, this is how to explain the concept of "*marbin b'simchah*" in Adar. All the mitzvos which are reason to be happy (including physical acts that are performed *l'shem Shamayim*) will involve greater happiness, joy over *k'vod Shamayim*.

It follows then that if there is *bittul Torah* in Adar, it is the total opposite. **In Adar we are *marbin b'simchah of esek haTorah* in joy, and *bittul Torah* is the polar opposite. It is not shayach to have *bittul Torah*!** Of course, every person must learn as much as he's able, as much as he can.

Rabbeinu Yonah writes in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (3:16), "When a person stops doing a mitzvah, he will be punished according to its importance." The greater a mitzvah is, the greater the punishment for failing to perform it. He cites the mitzvos of *Korban Pesach* and *milah* as examples. These mitzvos are *mitzvos aseis*, and a person who does not fulfill them — even though he doesn't do anything actively, he just refrains from taking action — is punished with *kareis*. This punishment of *kareis* for a *shev v'al ta'aseh*, is quite

unusual, but since they are such lofty, important mitzvos, the punishment is much greater.

If so, since the mitzvah of learning Torah and doing mitzvos *b'simchah* is even greater in Adar (*marbin b'simchah*), if we are deficient in performing *mitzvos b'simchah* or learning Torah joyfully at this time, it is very frightening. This is a time of "*marbin b'simchah*" and we are obligated to increase *simchah shel mitzvah*. If our *simchah shel mitzvah* isn't greater than it is during the rest of the year, we are not fulfilling our obligations. While the level of the obligation is individual, based on each person's abilities, it is an obligation nonetheless. Someone who cannot concentrate on reaching a greater level of *simchah* is not obligated to do what he cannot.

In any case, the concept of "*marbin b'simchah*" involves increasing *simchah shel mitzvah* — the joy that we experience all year long while fulfilling mitzvos and learning Torah must rise to a greater level. We should rejoice in *k'vod Shamayim* inherent in Torah and mitzvos!

Purim: Kabbalas HaTorah Out of Love

Let us now discuss Purim. There are special mitzvos for Purim: reading the megillah, *mishloach manos*, *matanos l'evyonim*, and the *seudah*. And a person is obligated to drink wine on Purim, *chayav inish l'vesumei b'Puria*, and be happy on Purim. But two big mistakes have become commonplace on Purim.

The first one is Torah learning on Purim. Some people think it's permissible to be *mevatel Torah* on Purim, as if there's no obligation to learn Torah on Purim. But how could this be? Is there a special exception that permits *bittul Torah* on Purim? To the contrary, the obligation should be even greater on Purim, because on Purim we accepted the Torah out of love, as Chazal say (*Shabbos* 88a): "In the times of Achashveirosh, the generation accepted it, as it states: The Yehudim fulfilled and accepted it — they fulfilled that which they already had accepted."

The Gemara there states that at Kabbalas HaTorah at Har Sinai "HaKadosh Baruch Hu *kafah aleihem har k'gigis* — held the mountain over their heads like a barrel — and He said: If you accept the Torah, good. If not, here will be your burial place." The Maharal explains (*Tiferes Yisrael* chap. 32) that this is not to be taken literally. Hashem didn't actually hold the mountain on top of them — the nation was under mental duress. It was as if their logic forced them to accept the Torah because they understood that without the Torah, *chas v'shalom*, "here will be your burial place." This is called out of fear; they accepted the Torah out of fear.

All of Klal Yisrael probably didn't fall into this category. After all, would Moshe Rabbeinu have accepted the Torah only under mental duress? Did Aharon, Chur, Yehoshua, and the Zekeinim require this mental coercion of "*har k'gigis*"? Probably not. Chazal were talking about the general public; for most of the *tzibbur*, or maybe just for the

minority of the *tzibbur*, Kabbalas HaTorah was coerced. They understood that there was no choice, and they had to accept the Torah. They realized that it wasn't worthwhile for them to live life without Torah. This is accepting Torah out of fear, not out of love. During the days of Achashveirosh, however, the nation accepted the Torah once again, and as Rashi and Tosfos explain, it was the result of their love due to the miracle they experienced.

If so, it turns out that Purim is a time of Kabbalas HaTorah, just like Shavuos — and even more so. On Shavuos, we accepted the Torah out of fear, and on Purim we accepted it out of love. It's well known that the *hashpa'ah* of each time comes down every year at the same time. For example, on Pesach, and during all the Shalosh Regalim, the *hashpa'ah* returns. Since there was a *hashpa'ah* of Torah on Purim, when the Jewish nation accepted the Torah out of love, this same *hashpa'ah* returns every Purim, and it is a time that is *mesugal*, conducive, to merit success in Torah. A person can merit Torah out of love — with joy! If so, how is it possible to be *mevatel Torah* on Purim? It simply cannot be! It's a time that is *mesugal* to success in Torah, and there surely is an obligation to be *oseik baTorah*.

I heard that many people experienced *yeshuos* through Torah. They needed a *yeshuah* and through *hasmadah* of Torah learning on Purim, they merited their *yeshuah*.

It's true that on Purim people are busy with the mitzvos of Purim, and there are specific times for these mitzvos, but when a person *can* learn, he has no *heter* to waste time from Torah learning.

The Gravity of Shaming a Person on Purim

There's one more thing. There are some people who are upset at another person and want to cause him pain, so they

wait for Purim, and then they post a write-up on a billboard. Or sometimes they just act with *leitzanus* at his expense and think they're making the *tzibbur* happy. They think it's "simchas Purim." Sometimes, they make a Purim play and act out a certain person — either someone *chashuv*, or even not so *chashuv* — and make wisecracks about him. I know for a fact that everyone who was involved in these types of scenarios was punished in very strange ways. **People who were involved in *leitzanus* on Purim, or people who took revenge, intending to hurt another person, were punished in extremely strange ways, *Rachmana litzlan*.**

To the contrary, Purim is a time of *ahavas habriyos* and sending *mishloach manos* to our friends. The *Tikkunei HaZohar* that says "*Purim k'Purim*" is well known. Meaning, that Yom HaKippurim is like Purim day and it's even on a higher level than Yom Kippur. [See *Taanis 7a: Katan nitleh b'gadol*.] There are explanations as to why this is so, but in any case, this is what's written. Just as a person experiences growth on Yom Kippur and rises to a higher *madreigah* due to his *teshuvah* and fasting, so too, a person receives a higher *madreigah* on Purim — even greater than on Yom Kippur!

If so, during a time when it's possible to reach such special *madreigos*, is it possible to be involved in things that are contrary to logic, against halachah, and the antithesis of good middos? It's *pashut* that such behavior is simply impossible! **Purim is a time for especially noble behavior *bein adam laMakom* and *bein adam lachaveiro*; this is our obligation on Purim.** Not everyone is aware of this. But people who are aware — and now we are all aware of it — *Ashreinu, mah tov chelkeinu* — How fortunate we are, how good is our lot! *B'ezras Hashem* may we all merit fulfilling the mitzvos of Purim properly. May we merit *berachah v'hatzlachah*.

Please daven for
גיטה פייגה בת רבקה
לרפואה שלימה ומהירה
בתוך כל חולי ישראל

For donations or dedications of the Hebrew and English flyers, or to receive the *sichos* to your email, please contact:

darkei.hachizuk@gmail.com

The *sichos* are transcribed and translated from a weekly *va'ad* in Rav Gershon Edelstein's home.