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## Purim - 022 Two Ways To Reach Simchah

### ***Increasing Our Joy in Adar: Where Do We Get Simchah From?***

*Baruch Hashem*, we are in the month of Adar, where we “increase joy”. We need to understand where does this *simchah* come from?

If someone isn't happy during the rest of the year, it cannot be said of him that he must “increase” his joy, because he doesn't have the joy to begin with. Rather, he would have to acquire joy in the first place. The mitzvah to “increase joy” in Adar implies that one needs the joy from beforehand, and in Adar he has an *avodah* to increase it.

### ***Mordechai Raised Esther With Emunah***

In the *Megillah*, it is written, "ויהי מרדכי אומן את הדסה, ותהי לו לבת" - “*And Mordechai knew Hadassah (Esther), and she was to him a daughter.*” Mordechai raised Esther\Hadassah in his home, and the *possuk* say that he “knew” her, אומן, which means that he raised her. But אומן can also come from the word אמונה - *emunah*\faith - meaning that he raised her with *emunah*. The second part of the *possuk* says that she was to him “a daughter”, and the Sages teach that this really means that he married her.

Is there a connection between the beginning of the *Megillah*, and the end of the *Megillah*, which ends with how there was “days of celebration and joy”? Or is the *Megillah* just telling us a story, that Mordechai raised Esther and married her, and eventually there was a miracle, and these days became days of celebration?

### ***The Root of Sadness - The Element of Earth***

Let us reflect.

Everything in Creation has an opposite force to it. What is the opposite of joy? Sadness. What is the natural state of a person - to be happy, or to be sad? Does a person need a reason to be happy, because naturally he is sad? Or is a person naturally happy and he would need a reason to make him sad? What is the root of sadness?

The root of sadness is explicitly stated in the Torah. When Adam and Chavah ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, there was a curse of “*etzev*” (pain and hardship) placed upon mankind. Woman was cursed with the pains of childbirth, and man has to endure the curse of hard labor, which is called *etzev*.

This *etzev* was not the intended plan which Hashem had in mind in creating man. When Hashem first created man, there was nothing but joy in Gan Eden, between Adam and Chavah, and Hashem Himself gladdened them there. After they had to leave Gan Eden because of the sin, both man and woman were cursed with sadness, and all of Creation as well was plunged into a natural sadness. If not for the sin, had man and woman remained in their initial pure state, the world would never know what sadness is.

As is well-known, there are four elements in Creation: fire, wind, water, and earth. Sadness is rooted in the element of earth. When man was cursed with “*from earth you come, and to the earth you shall return*”, this brought sadness to the world, and from this we learn that sadness comes from earth. The fact that man is now connected to the element of earth is the reason for sadness.

How, then, do we leave that “earth” which has become embedded into our makeup? How do we elevate ourselves above it and “shake off the dust”? How do we shake off the dust of the earth upon us which causes sadness, and how do we reveal an inner and deep kind of *simchah*?

Ever since man sinned, he is cursed with hard labor, in order to be able to survive. He must work in order to be able to eat. This was not just a curse of exertion. It meant that all of our life contains an ‘earthiness’ to it. Even when a person is riding on a bus and he’s 20 kilometers above the ground, his perspective is still attached to the “earth” of this world.

Ever since the sin, man has an attitude of living within the earthiness of this world, and our nature is that we are pulled after sadness, rather than happiness. Before the sin, the nature of man was to be happy, because man was in Gan Eden then. After the sin, when man is no longer in Gan Eden, he was cursed with having to return to “earth”, with death, and he entered into an “earthy” kind of existence. Now man is naturally sad, unless he has a reason to make him happy.

We can see that as soon as a baby is born, what is the first thing he does? He cries. He has come into a world in which “*from earth you come, and to the earth you shall return.*” He comes into this world, and he leaves the world accompanied with crying. It is all a result of the element of earth which man has become attached to ever since the first sin.

Now that we live after the sin, we are naturally drawn towards sadness. The question is: How do we leave this natural sadness, and to come to have *simchah*? How do we have *simchah* during the rest of the year, and in the month of Adar especially, where we are supposed to have more *simchah*, and especially Purim, the apex of our *simchah*? How do we arrive at *simchah* when it is currently not in our nature?

There are levels within levels to *simchah*. We will start with explaining the first level of it.

### ***Emunah Raises a Person***

As mentioned earlier, the possuk of **וַיְהִי אִמּוֹן אֶת הַדָּסָה** hints to us that Mordechai raised her, which is also interpreted to mean that he instilled *emunah* in her. How do we reconcile these two interpretations of the possuk? Is there a connection between these two meanings of the possuk, or are they separate and apart from each other?

There are always “seventy interpretations to the Torah”, and they are all given from “One shepherd”, which teaches us that even when there are differing explanations of a verse in the Torah, there is always one inner point that unifies them together. So when the possuk says that Mordechai raised Esther, and it also uses a term of *emunah*, there must be a connection between these two matters.

The connection is that when Mordechai raised her, he raised her with *emunah*. We can learn from

here that it is *emunah* which “raises” a person.

### ***Planting Emunah and Reaping the Benefits Later***

The earth is an element which does not grow. The only things that grow in earth are things which we put into it, which can emerge later from the earth, after it has been nurtured. But the earth itself does not grow. The Gemara says that “*Emunos*” is referring to “*Seder Zeraim*” of the *Mishnayos*, the agricultural laws of the Torah, and the *Talmud Yerushalmi* explains because “when a person plants his crops in the ground, he believes in the Eternally Living One”, and then he plants. Hence, the laws of *zeraim* are connected with *emunah*.

Why does a person need *emunah* in order to plant things? Why doesn't he just go by the statistics, and assume that by all means of probability, his crops will grow safely? True, sometimes there is flooding or drought, or other natural disasters, which might harm the crops. But during most years, the crops will grow normally, and everything will turn out fine. Why does he need *emunah* in order to plant things? The Sages teach us that a person really needs *emunah* in order to plant. How are we to understand this?

And doesn't a person always need *emunah*, not only when it comes to planting? When a person leaves his house to go to shul, does he not need *emunah* that he will arrive safely at shul? Maybe something might happen to him along the way, *chas v'shalom*. Does a person not need *emunah* whenever he's on the go? Does he not need *emunah* when he goes to sleep that he will wake up the next day? Not everyone wakes up the next day, so a person needs *emunah* before he goes to sleep, that he will wake up. What then is the special *emunah* that a person needs in Hashem when he is about to plant?

When a person plants something, he is placing a sprout into the earth. The sprout is a living creation, while the earth is a dead organism. So he is really lowering the level of the sprout, which is alive, by lowering it into the dead earth.

We place a man in the ground only when he is dead; we do not place him in the ground when he is alive, G-d forbid. We bury an animal in the ground only when it is dead, not when it is alive. Why does a person place a plant in the ground, then? Of course, it's because this is how it grows. But how does it work? Why is it that when we place plants into the ground, they grow, but when we place people and animals into the ground, they remain dead? Planting is thus a novel concept. It shows us that a non-living creation, the earth, can bring forth life.

The earth does not keep alive people and animals. But with plants, it nurtures them, keeps them alive, and makes them grow. When a person believes with *emunah* in Hashem before he plants things, the depth of this is because he knows how things can come out of the earth. It is not just to believe that the crops will grow. It is a power to take something alive, plant it into the ground, placing it into a place of death – inside the ground it is a place of death, not a place of life – and even though the plant “dies” in the ground, it “dies” in order to be nurtured by the earth, where it can sprout and grow.

What is the secret behind planting, where something is placed into the ground, a place of death, and something alive emerges from it and grows from it? This is the secret of the words of the Sages that before one plants anything, first “he believes in the Eternally living One”, and then only does he plant anything.

One believes that Mashiach will come and he awaits for him. If one does not believe in his arrival, he will not see his arrival; he doesn't get up by the resurrection of the dead. The simple way to

understand this is because if he didn't believe, he is missing *zechusim* (merits) and so he doesn't merit to be revived. But the deeper way to understand it is because it is only the *emunah* in Mashiach's arrival which resurrects him. If he didn't have the *emunah*, he was missing the ingredient that resurrects people from the dead.

If a person plants a wheat kernel, he can later enjoy the wheat when it grows from the earth. When he places seeds of a fruit in the ground, eventually there will be fruit that grows. *Emunah* is also something we "plant". If one plants *emunah*, he gets up from the ground by the resurrection of the dead. If one doesn't have *emunah*, he never planted anything, so he cannot get out of the ground.

When does our *emunah* emerge ripe from the ground? It will be when Mashiach comes, where we will see all that we have planted. Then "*they will awaken and rejoice, those who dwelled in the earth.*" Just as a seed is planted in the ground and eventually it emerges as a ripe crop from the ground, so will those who had *emunah* in their lifetimes emerge out of the ground, renewed. (The more *emunah* one had, the more he will be renewed.)

So *emunah* is what we "plant" ourselves with, and *emunah* is what makes us emerge from the "ground" one day. We "plant with tears, and with joy we reap". When a person is buried, there are tears - "we plant with tears". But when a person rises from the ground, there will be joy; "with joy we reap." Awakening from death, where people will rise from the ground, is enabled by a person's *emunah* that he had in his lifetime.

That will be in the future, and Hashem should help us reach that time even now. But even before Mashiach arrives, before the resurrection of the dead, we have an opportunity every day to experience this on some level. Every day a person goes to sleep, which is considered to be "a sixtieth of death". When a person rises in the morning, he is renewed. Just as a person will get up in the future from the ground, according to the level of *emunah* that he had, so does a person getting up in the morning resemble a degree of the resurrection of the dead. Every day in *Shemoneh Esrei*, in the blessing of **מחי מתים**, we thank Hashem for reviving the dead, in the present tense, which implies that Hashem is reviving people every day. This refers to the resurrection which we experience every day when we get up in the morning.

If a person wasn't sure if Hashem will wake him tomorrow, would he go to sleep? (Some people, unfortunately, would). Most people will not go to sleep if there is even a slight chance that they won't wake up the next day. What is the reason, then, that a person goes to sleep at night? It is because deep down, he believes that he is entrusting his soul to Hashem at night.

This shows us about a deep point in our soul. Even if a person says that he doesn't have any belief in Hashem (Heaven forbid), and even if he doesn't say it openly and he just denies it in his own thoughts, there is still an *emunah* which every person is making use of each day. A person deep down believes that today can continue into the next day. He believes that today is not the last day of his life, and that it is not the last day of the world or the last day of the universe. If a person would have even the slightest suspicion that perhaps today is the last day of life, he would behave totally differently. He would feel differently, he would think differently, and he would do different things. But our nature is that we naturally believe that today is not the last day on earth.

When you eat a fruit, is there a continuation to the fruit you are eating? The particular fruit you are eating will not continue anymore. But if you plant that fruit in the ground, there will be a continuation to it. Planting shows us that everything has a continuation to it. A person who has no children is considered to be dead. When a person has children, he is considered alive, because his children continue his existence.

When one has *emunah* in Hashem before he plants, the depth of this is because he believes that there will be continuation. Things which grow, things which are alive, and people, are all creations that have a continuation to them. Anything which has a continuation to it is called *emunah*.

### ***Emunah vs. Despair***

What is the opposite of *emunah*? Let's take, for example, the belief that Mashiach will come. Why would a person stop believing (G-d forbid) in the coming of Mashiach? One reason is if he would become a heretic. A second reason would be because he simply gives up. The opposite of *emunah* is not only *kefirah* (heresy), but *yeiush* (despair). When a person sees that something isn't happening, he is apt to have *yeiush*, despair.

If a person is imprisoned, G-d forbid, and he's sitting in jail for a year, two years, twenty years or more – G-d forbid – he is very likely to feel despair in such a situation. But we have been waiting for Mashiach for much more than twenty years. We have been waiting for this since the beginning of time. Our wait for him didn't begin with the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. It began many years before, ever since the day that Adam sinned and was sent out of Gan Eden, where we have been awaiting Mashiach. The only way for us to go back to our original state in Gan Eden will only happen in the era of Mashiach, and at this point, 5771 years have passed since then, where we have been awaiting Mashiach for all of this time. The force which dampens our belief in Mashiach's arrival is *yeiush*, despair.

What is despair? Despair says that there will be no continuation. To illustrate, the Gemara says that if one finds a lost item, he is only allowed to keep it if there are no markings on it, and if the owner despaired. When the owner despairs, the person who finds it may keep it. The person who despairs says, "Woe to me, upon this monetary loss." In other words, he is saying, "I had it, and now I don't; it's over". But if the owner has some sliver of hope that he might find it, he believes that there is continuation here, and that it's not all over.

Despair kills all hope for continuation. *Emunah* says that there can be continuation.

The Sages state, "One must say, "When will my actions reach the actions of my forefathers?" What does this mean? It means to believe in the continuation of the Avos, of all that they had reached, and therefore, I can link myself to them and continue the link. Did the forefathers exist one time in history and now they are longer here? Or can their lives be continued?

If a person says that he will never touch upon the actions of the Avos, it means he has really "despaired" over the actions of the Avos. In his perspective, they are not his Avos! A son is a continuation of his father. Do we believe that there is a continuation to the path that began with the Avos? To wish that our actions can reach the actions of our forefathers means that we did not despair from the path which they began. Rather, their path continues.

That is what is called *emunah*. *Emunah* at its root did not begin with the actions of the Avos. Hashem created His own handiwork, Adam, in Gan Eden, and Adam was sent out of Gan Eden. Do we have any *emunah* that we can return to there? That is *emunah*. *Emunah* says that if something exists, it will continue. True, right now there has been a schism in the grand plan of things, and it is currently not revealed. But it began, and it will continue.

When a person doesn't have *emunah* and he has *yeiush*, he becomes sad. When a person has *emunah* that something will definitely come back, whether it comes back in a month, or in two months, a year or two years or more, but he believes totally that it shall come back – he is eternally connected to that which he believes in.

If a person G-d forbid loses a child in his lifetime, and he does not have *emunah* in *techiyas hameisim*, then he has totally disconnected himself from his own child. But if he believes in *techiyas hameisim*, and he believes that after 120 years he will be able to meet his child again in Heaven, then the absence of his child will feel only temporary. It will still feel painful for him, it will feel very painful, but it doesn't mean he has become totally disconnected from his child. The connection will still be there.

This is what *emunah* is. *Emunah* is to believe, with conviction, that whatever has begun, shall continue. It will return someday. We await Mashiach "even though he tarries." He will definitely come, and we don't know when. But he will definitely come. That is our *emunah* in the coming of Mashiach. When we believe with absolute conviction that something will return to us, we are never disconnected from it.

### **The Emunah of Queen Esther**

The depth of *emunah* is contained in the verse of **וַיְהִי אֱמוּנָן אֶת הַדָּסָה**, the fact that Mordechai raised Esther in his home. What does it mean that he raised her? Does it mean he gave her breakfast every day? It means that he brought her up through *emunah*. He taught her that if something grows, it always continues. If it can grow bigger, it never stops. Something which does not get bigger gets smaller, until it turns to nothing. Mordechai raised Esther with the attitude that there is always continuation.

When Esther realized that there was a decree of genocide upon the entire Jewish people, her *emunah* that she was raised with quickly jumped in and she knew that such a thing cannot happen. Her *emunah* told her that the Jewish people will always continue, so she knew that the decree cannot come to action. The Jewish people, who upkeep the existence of the world, can never go missing. There is always a continuation of the Jewish people. This is what is called *emunas Yisrael* – the faith that a Jew has. The Gemara says that none of the 12 tribes will ever be destroyed, and this shows us that there is always a continuation to the Jewish people.

### **Happiness Within Sadness**

This power of *emunah* is the root of how a person can leave the element of earth, and reveal *simchah*. When a person dies, there is sadness. His body returns to the earth, and he is accompanied to the grave with crying. But if a person has the attitude that returning to the earth means eventual growth from the earth, herein lays a root of *simchah*.

When a person plants, he may be sad that he is losing these seeds, but he knows that ultimately it will emerge as a ripe and complete crop from the ground; there is happiness within the sadness as he plants it. When a person plants a wheat kernel, is he upset that he has lost it now? No, because he knows that eventually there will emerge many more wheat kernels from it. One can "plant with tears", yet be aware at the same time that there will be a harvest, and in that way, he can have happiness amidst his current sadness; he will still feel pain, but it will be mitigated, from his hope in the future.

In order to leave behind sadness, and enter into *simchah*, one of the ways is, to see hope amidst death; to view death and darkness as a "planting" of *emunah*, where eventually, something will emerge from that darkness.

### **The Deeper Way of Handling Difficult Periods of Life**

All of us in our life go through various difficult situations. Sometimes we go through pleasant times, and sometimes, we go through rougher times. What happens when a person goes through unpleasant situations?

There are different reactions. Some people become angry. Some people choose to suffer in silence, just as Aharon was silent upon hearing about the death of his children. Some people are on the level of saying, "Everything that Hashem does is for the good." That is a wonderful level to be on. Others are on an even higher level and they simply believe that everything is from Hashem, and that is enough for them. Yet, this is still not the depth of our life.

When we face difficulty in our life, we are really going through a situation of "death". The Gemara says, "What difference does it make if it's killed entirely or halfway?" A person is either killed entirely or partially, so there is a partial kind of death that a person may go through. Any difficulty that a person goes through is really "a sixtieth of death". And the reason why these situations are given to us is so that it can lead us to "plant" *emunah* from them.

All of the "deaths" that we go through - not the death which comes at the end of life, but the deaths we experience on a partial level in our own lifetime, which feels like a degree of death - are meant for us to plant *emunah* from them. We "plant with tears", and what are we planting? We are planting *emunah*. All that we go through, without exception, whether it seems good or bad, is always an opportunity to plant more *emunah*. If one lives with awareness of this perspective, he leaves behind sadness and despair, and he enters into the place that is called *simchah*.

Esther declared Purim as *y'mei mishteh v'simchah*, "days of celebration and joy." She reaped forth the *emunah* that emerged from this grim situation, because Mordechai had raised her with the *emunah* attitude, that whatever happens will always lead to something good. He didn't just teach her to accept suffering with love and with *emunah*. Rather, all that we go through is an opportunity to plant *emunah*. Then there can be growth from the ground, and eventually, there can be a "revival of the dead" that emerges from the ground.

The words here are not just words and definitions. They are life, to anyone who searches for real vitality in life.

### **Our Entire Reward Is Emunah**

Every person who goes to work gets paid a salary at the end. A person has "work" on this world and he has to work hard. What kind of salary is he awaiting in return from all of this work? What kind of *s'char* (reward) are we looking forward to? Is a person awaiting gardens and lush lands in Gan Eden? Is he waiting for marble tiling in a palace? What does a person want Gan Eden to look like?

"There is no *s'char* (reward) for *mitzvos* on This World." Why is there no reward for *mitzvos* on this world? It is because the reward of a *mitzvah* is our own *emunah*. It is written, "All of Your *mitzvos*, are *emunah*." But this reward is only available to one who searches for *emunah*. If one isn't looking for *emunah*, he doesn't consider this to be a reward.

What is the reward which Hashem will give to His creations one day? Hashem will pay us back with one thing alone. Everything else will be on the side. The one thing we will get back for all that we have done, is *emunah*. That will be our reward!

Some people hear this and they say, "So what I am working so hard for on this world?! It's not worth it! That's what all my hard work is for? That's my reward in the end for everything that I have ever done?! *Emunah*? In that case, I'm not interested in working so hard!" But this is the absolute truth.

When you take an orange and you squeeze out the juice, that juice is all you have from it. What is all the 'juice' that we can squeeze out of this world? One thing alone: whatever *emunah* we have gained.

Our souls have been returning to this world in *gilgulim* (reincarnations) over the last 6,000 years, and

what do we have from all of our lifetimes? One thing alone: our *emunah* that we have gained in *Hashem Yisborach*. It is this that we are working hard for. "The job is not upon you to complete, but you are not exempt from it." The *Mesillas Yescharim* says that our task on this world begins with hard work, and it ends with a gift. What is the gift we walk away with at the end of everything? To merit true *emunah*. That is all that we have from our existence in Creation.

There is nothing else we are living for! All that we see in front of us are nothing but "tools" to help us get to that recognition, nothing more. Besides for *emunah*, there is nothing else in Creation.

One who tastes *emunah* and he feels a vitality in it, is one who can begin to understand how this will be our entire reward that we walk away with: to recognize the reality of *Ain Od Milvado*, "There is nothing besides for Him." One who doesn't feel this and doesn't live this is left in wonder of how it could be that our entire reward from all our hard work is the *emunah*.

### ***The Difference Between Purim and The Other Festivals***

Mordechai raised Esther with *emunah*, to believe that there is always a continuation, and from this came the salvation to the Jewish people. The festivals will all disappear in the future, except for Purim. This is because everything we walked away with from Purim is about one thing alone: the *emunah* in Hashem, and nothing more. That is the one thing which will never disappear.

On Pesach, we have *matzah* and *maror*, and the *korbon pesach*. These things are all physical and they will eventually disappear. On Sukkos, we dwelled in the Clouds of Glory, which were also tangible. On Purim, though, we did not gain any physical mitzvos from it. We walked away with one thing alone from it: *emunah* in Hashem. This is the one thing that will never go away, and it is also all that we will have in the future.

The other festivals also reveal *emunah*, but they are all "garments" of the *emunah*. But Purim revealed to us how every situation is really *emunah* in Hashem. That is the whole purpose of recounting the miracle of Purim. It is a hidden miracle which is openly revealed to anyone who has *emunah*. The events of the world happen, the world runs its course, and the question is - how each person sees it.

### ***Connecting To Purim vs. Superficially Fulfilling The Mitzvos of Purim***

A person who sees the *emunah* throughout the story of the *Megillas Esther* and when it comes Purim he lives that *emunah* - he is a "*ben olam haba*" (destined for the World To Come).

But if it comes Purim and a person merely fulfills the *mitzvos* of *mishloach manos* and *matanos l'evyonim*, and he also has the Purim *seudah*, but he doesn't live the story of the *Megillas Esther* and he doesn't gain a vitality from the *emunah* that was clearly revealed by this story - then he has no connection to Purim! He definitely fulfills the *mitzvos* and he will certainly get reward for it, Hashem doesn't withhold reward from anyone, but he is not connected to the actual day that is Purim.

The days of "celebration and joy" of Purim is not merely a *simchah* where we celebrate our survival. Surely that is also part of it, but it's not everything. There was a decree that all of us should get killed and we were saved, and we celebrate this, but that's not the depth of the *simchah* of Purim. The depth of the *simchah* on Purim is when a person believes that there is Hashem, there are His creations and there is a holy Torah, and the Jewish people are the root creations, and they are eternal. "The eternity of Yisrael does not lie" - it cannot ever be discontinued.

A person can feel this on Purim and see the *emunah* in its full force, of the Divine Plan. When a person realizes the Divine Providence of the Purim story, that itself is the miracle. The miracle is not simply

that we were saved. Even if we would have died, it would only have been physically, because our souls would still exist in Heaven, for the Jewish people are eternal. Purim means to see the Divine plan, through *emunah* - and to derive a *simchah* from it.

### ***The Purpose of Intoxication on Purim: Losing Your Impaired Daas and Gaining the Holy Daas of Emunah***

What does it mean that Purim is “days of celebration and joy?” When a person drinks on Purim, it should be like the Gemara says, “Whoever becomes convinced through his wine, he has daas of the Creator.” When one drinks the wine on Purim, he can lose his *daas* - meaning, he can lose his natural *daas*, which is currently the “*daas* of the Serpent” that entered mankind ever since the first sin - and then he can see a clear perspective on things, through the perspective of *emunah*.

People think that drinking wine on Purim means to make yourself happy through the wine, and they take literally the verse, “*Wine gladdens the heart of man*”, and people think that this is the meaning of the “*mitzvah*” of the day. This is not the “*mitzvah*” of the day - it is basically “the sin” of the day! It has nothing to do with Purim! Gentiles also get drunk in the bar with this same thinking. It clearly cannot be the *mitzvah* of the day to simply get drunk.

The *mitzvah* of Purim day is *mishteh v'simcha*, “celebration and joy”, which means a drinking that causes a person to lose his crooked and impaired *daas*, his incorrect perspectives, where he does not see the truth. When he loses his false *daas* - the *daas* that entered into our psyche ever since man ate from the *Eitz HaDaas* that contained evil *daas* - now he is left with only holy and good *daas*. He sees from then on that **כי טוב ה'**, “Hashem is good.” He sees how the entire story of the *Megillah*, from beginning until end, is nothing but revelation of Hashem's *malchus* upon the world. And from there, a person reaches what is called *simchah*.

When one truly reaches this *simchah*, it doesn't make a difference to him how much he drank that day or not.

The entire essence of the day of Purim, which is about *simchah*, begins with *emunah*. It begins with **ויהי אומן את הדסה**, the fact that Mordechai raised Esther with *emunah* - and that is what led to the “days of celebration and joy” that is Purim.

That is all one path of how a person can reach *simchah*.

### ***A Second Path Towards Simchah: Disconnecting From This World***

There is a second path as well, based upon the next half of the above *possuk*: **ותהי לו לבת**, Esther was like a daughter to him, which Chazal expound to mean that that he married her. What is the depth behind why Mordechai married her?

Man in Gan Eden had joy with Hashem in Gan Eden. Ever since the sin when man and woman had to leave Gan Eden, there was sadness. When Mordechai married Esther, after having raised her with *emunah*, what was he really doing? He was returning to Gan Eden, to the original joy that was in Gan Eden, which was between the first man and woman, Adam and Chavah. There was no sadness then, no element of earth that took over man yet. Mordechai married Esther to resemble the original marriage between Adam and Chavah.

Mordechai didn't bow to Haman even though it was permissible for him to do so - it is permissible to flatter the wicked if they are powerful and dangerous, and even so, Mordechai did not bow to Haman. Why? The depth of this is because Mordechai lived in a Gan Eden-like state! In Gan Eden, there are no wicked people, so there is no one there to flatter!

Mordechai lived in a different world entirely! He didn't 'live' in a world that everyone else lived in, where there was an Achashveirosh, a Haman, where there was strife, where there was war. Mordechai lived somewhere else. He was living in a generation where there was nothing in front of him! It was like Adam before the sin, where he lived only with Hashem in Gan Eden, along with Chavah his wife. That is what kind of existence Mordechai lived.

And how did he accomplish the return to Gan Eden? Adam was sent out of it and entered into sadness, into despair. But Mordechai rectified this, by raising Esther with *emunah*. He returned to the original state of Adam in Gan Eden before the sin.

Adam was sent out of Gan Eden and in the future all of us those who merit it will return to that state. What is an example we have today of the future? Purim. All festivals will disappear in the future. Purim is a resemblance of the future, so it is also the resemblance of the state of Adam before the sin. Just as Adam before the sin had only joy and no sadness, so did Mordechai have no sadness.

That is the depth of why he didn't bow to Haman, who had an idol hanging from his neck, because idols are called "*atzavim*", from the word *atzvus*, sadness. Idol worship is connected with sadness. But Mordechai lived in a dimension where there is no sadness, he lived in a Gan Eden like state, so he had no connection to sadness. That is why he could not bow to Haman.

The miracle that was wrought by Mordechai and Esther was therefore taking place in a state of "before sin" which they were living in, and that is why it is forever, because anything that existed before the sin is eternal. When sin is removed from the world, it removes anything that was connected with sin. Something that was done in a world of Gan Eden, is eternal, because it is not connected with sin.

If a person removes from himself sadness and he lives in complete *simchah*, he is not found in this world! This world is called "the lowly world", it is a world which is connected to the element of earth, the lowest of the elements. When a person leaves sadness and enters into *simchah*, he is not found on this tangible world which we recognize.

If a person will ask, "Do you mean that Mordechai wasn't here on this world? Did he not wear *tefillin*?" He surely was on the world, but he wasn't on This World which we recognize, which is connected to the element of earth. He was part of *Klal Yisrael*, he lived in Shushan and with the Jews of Shushan, but he lived a "*tefach* higher" than the ground which everyone else lived on. When a person walks on the ground of this world alone and that is where he identifies his existence, he is connected to the earth; his feet touch the ground and they become dirtied from the earth. In the olden days, people worshipped the dirt on their feet. But Mordechai was above the ground - and not within it.

The Sages say that the day of Purim will never cease, because it is from an otherworldly dimension, a different world than this one, which can never cease. It is from a world of revelation, which always continues and never stops. This is because the concept of *emunah* says that there is always continuation.

It is written in the Megillah, "**וּמֵרַדְכַּי יָדַע אֶת הַגְּזִירָה וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה**", "*Mordechai knew about the decree and all that had happened*" - and the *Sfas Emes* explains this to mean that he knew that the decree will cease. How did he know it would cease? Simply speaking, he had *ruach hakodesh*, but the deeper reason is because he knew there could never be such a decree. When everyone else heard the decree, they were saddened, because they were not aware of the *emunah* that Mordechai had. But Mordechai had the *emunah* that it would not happen, and so he was able to live all the time with *simchah*.

Only when someone has this *emunah* can he leave the element of earth and its sadness.

### **What Do We Take From Purim?**

In simpler and clearer language, to what can we compare Purim to? When a person wades into the sea, he leaves dry land and enters into water. When a person enters Purim, he goes through one door and exits through another door. How does he enter it? With just *leitzanus* (jest)? And what does he walk away with, from Purim?

The day of Purim is a day that continues; it does not stop. If Purim has stopped for a person, if “it’s over” the day after it ends, such a Purim is not a Purim. Purim is all about the *emunah* in continuation. If it stops at the 15<sup>th</sup> of Adar for a person, it is not Purim. Not only has it ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> for such a person – even on the 14<sup>th</sup> it wasn’t a Purim. The Purim that “ends” for a person after it’s over is not a Purim!

With what does a person go into Purim with, and with what does he leave it with? We all have *emunah* in the principles of our faith. Some of us have clearer *emunah* and some have less clearer *emunah*, and some have it less on even an intellectual level. But the question is how much **chiyus** (vitality) a person has from his *emunah*. That is the yardstick which measures a person’s true level.

One kind of measuring stick is how well a person accepts suffering with love, another measuring stick is how happy a person can be in difficult times, but there is an entirely different way that shows a person’s true level. Chavakuk said the “one” thing in the final generations which all rests on is, “A righteous person shall live by his faith.” This means that what sustains a person is his *emunah*.

### **From Where Are We Getting Our Chiyus (Spiritual Vitality) From?**

When a person is thirsty and he gets water, he feels that it revitalizes him. He feels it tangibly. What sustains our soul? What makes us feel alive?

If a person eats and he feels that it has nourished him well, from where does this food come? All food comes from the ground, from the element of earth. If so, if a person feels that eating good food makes him happy, he is getting his feeling of vitality from the element of earth, which will not be enough to invigorate his spiritual vitality.

The same goes for bread, fruit, and vegetables which all come from the ground. Can any of these things give us *chiyus*? The Sages say that the more a person enjoys this world, he is drinking “salty water” – it seems that it is satisfying him but really it’s making him thirstier. When a person wants more and more things of this world, all of these things come from earth, so he is becoming more and more dependent on all of this earth.

If a person has a source of vitality in his life along with all of the “earth” that he is consuming, he will be able to nurse forth vitality which brings *simchah*. This doesn’t mean to learn Torah every day for an hour, or to do more mitzvos. It is about living from the *mitzvah* that you do.

There are people who do all the mitzvos but only because they have to, as if they are forced, or because they know it’s important, or because they know that it’s the purpose of living. But do they get *chiyus* from it? Avraham Avinu was against the whole world in his times, when the whole world didn’t believe in Hashem, and Avraham was the only one who believed. He didn’t just believe in Hashem, he lived from it.

The Sages say that righteous are called alive even after death, whereas the wicked are called dead even they are while alive. The depth of this because when the wicked live, they live off their element

of earth, which is a deathlike vitality, a life of sadness. But the *tzaddikim* get their vitality from the G-dly light within the soul, from the Torah which that reveals, and from the *mitzvos* which are the garments of this light. At death, when a *tzaddik* returns his body to the earth, it is only his external body which goes back to the earth, but his soul remains alive and full of life.

We cannot get *chiyus* from anything that is connected to the element of earth. Anything connected to earth is connected with death; by contrast, anything not connected with earth does not die. Thus, the *tzaddikim* live on after they die.

What does it mean to live and be alive? It means to live a life in which there is always continuation. This is what it means to live a life of *emunah*. When a person derives vitality from solely from food, or from his family life, or from the events of the world, he does not have real vitality, because all of these things have an end to them. But when a person lives from his bond with Hashem, and from the Torah he learns, which is “the Torah that is never exchanged”, and from true *ahavas Yisrael* – of whom it said “The eternity of Yisrael does not lie” – he lives from the things which have no end to them. This is what it means to have *chiyus*!

In order to reach this *chiyus* - this inner place - one needs to remove himself from all of the dirty, blackened “garments” of This World.

### ***Mishteh V'Simchah - Celebration and Then Joy***

In order to reach *simchah* in Purim, there must be “*mishteh*” (celebration) beforehand, for Purim is called “*mishteh v'simchah*” – hence, there must be first be “*mishteh*” (celebration\drinking) that precedes the *simchah* (joy) and *simchah* (joy) can only come after *mishteh* (celebration). We explained above that *mishteh* does not mean *chas v'shalom* for a person to simply get drunk and lose his *daas*, and to become like an insane person who is exempt from keeping the *mitzvos*. Rather, it means that one needs to lose his false *daas*, and to reveal the *daas* Torah, *daas* of the Creator, higher *daas* – not the *daas* of Bilaam, who “knows” his donkey, to “know” of the materialism of This World. The Jewish people possess a higher *daas*, not a *daas* that knows materialism. If one knows of materialism and he is connected to it, he's already ‘dead’ as he lives on this world.

### ***Three Days of Preparation Before Purim***

There were three days of fasting which preceded the miracle of Purim, where Haman met his downfall by the *seudah* which Esther made. In simpler words, before we can celebrate, there must first be a disconnection from This World.

Every year, in order to enter Purim, we first need *Taanis Esther*. Why is it that before Pesach there is no *taanis* for everyone? Why is it that before Shavuos there is no *taanis*? And why is it that in the days preceding Sukkos, there is no fasting? It is because in order to have the *mishteh v'simchah* of Purim, there must be *taanis*.

If one doesn't have a *taanis* before Purim, for him, Purim will not be a *mishteh* and it will not be a *simchah*. It will be a *mishteh* Haman, or a *mishteh* Achashveirosh; it is not like the *mishteh* of Esther.

This *taanis* essentially means that there should be a disconnection from This World. In the time of Purim, the fast was three days long. We also find that in order to prepare for receiving the Torah, they prepared for three days. This is because it is necessary to prepare for three days, in order to disconnect from the world.

When a person has disconnected from the world, he is able to drink in the right way on Purim and lose his *daas* and reveal the true *simchah*, which is to have *chiyus* from *emunah*. But if a person enters

into Purim from the life outside which we see, which looks like life but is really death, he doesn't enter into Purim with Mordechai's perspective, who disconnected from the world by refusing to bow to the idols. Remember that Mordechai was the one who enabled the salvation of the Jewish people.

### **Modern-Day "Party of Achashveirosh"**

One needs to disconnect, totally, from the surroundings. We must not join "the *seudah* of that wicked one" (Achashveirosh). Although the Midrash says that the party of Achashveirosh was entirely kosher, Mordechai was the *mashgiach* there, it was the best kind of *Badatz*, yet it was still called the "*seudah* of that wicked one" - and that is what is happening today. The vanities which people of the world are chasing today are like enjoying the "*seudah* of that wicked one."

What is not 'kosher' about it? In many cases it's not even kosher to begin with. But even when it's technically kosher, it is the antithesis to disconnecting from the world. It enables a person to connect to an unholy world.

From where do we get *chiyus*? That is the question of all questions. *Chiyus* from an inner place, from a holy place, from a place where there is no evil - that is the *chiyus* of Purim.

Even Mordechai, who wouldn't bow to Haman, who enabled the salvation, was not respected by all of the people. He was admired by "most" of the Jewish people, but not all of them. Why not all of them? The Sages explain that members of the *Sanhedrin* distanced themselves from him because they did not agree with him for becoming connected with the government. We are talking about the *tzaddik* Mordechai, who did not bow to Haman, and the only reason why he was connected with the Persian government then was all for the sake of saving *Klal Yisrael!* Yet, even so, the *Sanhedrin* kept their distance from him. How much more so does this apply to people who choose, *l'chatchilah*, to become connected with the government. It is a deliberate choice to connect to an impure place.

When a person ate from *seudah* of Achashveirosh, from he did he get his *chiyus* from? He got his *chiyus* from Achashveirosh, and that is why he was part of the decree of Achashveirosh. If a person takes money from the government, from is he getting his *chiyus* from? From the "50<sup>th</sup> gate of impurity." He will be stuck in it until Mashiach comes, and he will not return to *teshuvah* before then.

This is not a joke. People think it is an extreme view. People in the time of Purim also thought that Mordechai was being extreme, for not bowing to Haman. Not only were the wicked saying he was extreme; everyone was saying that he was acting extreme, and that he should acquiesce.

*Baruch Hashem* in our *kolel* here, with *siyata d'shmaya*, we have the **zechus** to take money from the government. I give all of you a *berachah* that you should never give money to the government, even once. And if you've already given, I give you a *berachah* that you should not take from them. It is impossible to live from the "*seudah* of that wicked one." The truth is one truth, it is simple, and it is pure.

But it's more comfortable for people to do otherwise and to keep taking money from the government. People are scared that if they don't take money from the government, the *beis midrash* will slowly empty out because everyone will have to go to work in order to support themselves. So they feel like they have no choice but to take money from the government - although this will end up compromising on the values of *chinuch* of their children. The true alternative to the situation, though, is *emunah* - to "believe in the Eternally Living one, and plant."

Does anyone here think for even a second that a person can live from taking money from the government? It is a connection to a place that is not pure. He will then become part of the 'decree of

Achashveirosh', because he has benefitted from the "*seudah* of that wicked one".

The Gemara says that there are children who go astray because they have dishonest money. The money which is supporting them is coming from falsity, and sometimes it is even outright stealing. When people eat the food bought with such money, the food damages them spiritually and causes the children to go astray. The question is where a person is getting his *chiyus* from. If we wake a person in middle of the night, or if we stop a person in the street, and we ask him what he is thinking about and what he is connected to, and what he does, and where his heart is, where his thoughts are, and from where does he feel alive - that is the question.

### ***In Conclusion***

May Hashem merit all of us to draw forth our vitality in life from an inner source, to help those who are too connected to the outside, superficial, and external world we see - and to search for a *chiyus* that comes only from a bond with Hashem and His Torah, and not from any other strange place.

*Purim someiach*, to all of you.