



Parashat Ki Tisa



English version

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ANTICIPATION THERAPY

Happiness is something that will help us in so many life areas. The Arizal was quoted as saying that sadness is what ruins a person's Parnassah. And when a person brings happiness into his life, he brings Parnassah. This is hinted at in the end letters of the words והיית אך שמח. The letters spell the name of the Angel who is responsible of Parnassah – חת"ך. At times, all you need in order to close a deal is a real smile, but the real smile is sometimes so hard to keep on our faces. All people search happiness, but only a minority find it.

The mitzvah of happiness in Adar is not just for the holiday of Purim. It is the mitzvah of the month. As the passuk says, *The month that was reversed for them from grief to joy.* (Esther 9:22) Happiness has a number of elements to it. What, specifically, is the happiness of Adar about? And, is there something unique in the month of Adar that made G-d want the holiday to fall out then, and not in another time?

Rashi explains why Adar is a time to increase happiness. משנכנס אדר - ימי נסים היו לישראל: פורים. We begin to be happy in the month of Adar *for there were miracles then* - Purim and Pesach. (Taanit 29a) The miracles of Purim and Pesach occurred in Adar and Nissan - so these are happy months, months of miracles, hope and redemption. We begin to be happy in these months because, as the Baal Shem Tov would say, כִּי-בְשִׂמְחָה תֵצֵאוּ. When you feel happy, you can leave your difficulties behind. Because when you are happy, miracles happen. Through happiness, we will be redeemed. To keep this happiness a whole year long, one needs not just one month of happiness, but two.

The happiness of Adar is an inner happiness, a positive state of mind. When R' Akiva saw a fox exiting the Holy of Holies after the destruction of the Temple, although his friends were crying, he was laughing. *R' Akiva, why are you happy to see the Temple in total destruction? He answered, why are you crying? If the prophecy of Uriah that the Temple will be plowed under came true, the prophecy of Zecharia will definitely come true, יָדוּ מְשֻׁבְּרֵי זָקְנִים וְזָקֵנוֹת בְּרִחוֹת וְרוֹשְׁלָם. Men and women of ripe old age will yet again dwell in [the streets of] Jerusalem...* With these words, R' Akiva's friends announced, *You have consoled us. You have opened a window of hope for us.*

R Noach Weinberg would teach that one way to happiness is to anticipate something amazing. Then, you will have much more pleasure from what you anticipate, because you already preprogrammed yourself to view this upcoming experience as amazing. Happiness begins from the minute we hope, from the anticipation that something amazing is about to happen. If you always look forward to something, you will always be happy.

R' Chaim Shmuelevitz teaches this, as well. When we anticipate something we do not want, we cannot stay happy. The Or Hachaim in Vayechi tells us that the reason sometimes the Torah refers to Yaakov as Yaakov, and at other times Yisrael is that when he was happy, he was called Yisrael. But when he was down, when he was in pain, when he was worried..., he was referred to as Yaakov. This answers the question - How did the angel of Esav hurt Yaakov? Wasn't Yaakov able to overpower him? The Seforno writes, on the words וַיֵּרָא כִּי לֹא יָכַל לֹא וַיִּגַע בְּכַף-יָרְכוֹ וַתִּקַּע כַּף-יָרְכוֹ וַיַּעֲקֹב *And he saw that*

he could not reach him, and he touched his hip, and he displaced the hip of Yaakov. The words that say that the angel could not overcome Yaakov mean that as long as Yaakov was connected with G-d, in thought, or in speech, the angel could not cause him harm. But once the Angel of Esav told Yaakov of the future sins of the Jewish nation's leaders, sins that come from Yaakov's hip, from his descendants, this got Yaakov worried. And these worries made Yaakov vulnerable. Because when Yaakov was worried, he lost connection with G-d, for just a second.

R Wolbe teaches something amazing. All real happiness in life is a combination of two opposites joining - man and woman - body and soul - heaven and earth - G-d and His people. When it rains, it is the joining between heaven and earth, and this is the happiness of Sukkot at the beginning of the rainy season. This is why it is so important to learn Torah with happiness, and to pray to Hashem with happiness, for, as we know, prayer and Torah are where G-d and His people connect. "When you pray - you are talking to G-d. When you learn - G-d is talking to you". If you are not happy when you are learning - G-d is not talking to you. פקודי יקנה פקודי יקנה. If you are not happy when praying, you are not talking to G-d.

Adar is when winter and summer meet. It is the time when last year meets the new year that begins with Nissan. It is a time that past meets future. It is a time to anticipate, to say that the past is the past and the future can be a new beginning, if only we can find hope in the present. Hope in G-d that He can start everything anew. It is the month in which you have the most hope, because it is the month that is אלהי (אלופו של עולם) דר. G-d is among us in a special way.

According to Sefer Yetzirah, the month of Adar corresponds to the feeling of laughter. Laughter is when the opposite of what you expected happens. Adar is correspondent to the tribe of Naftali, and Naftali's power is גמ-יכלתי...נפתלתי. It is the month when, if we pray hard enough, learn Torah enough, G-d gives us the power to change even His own decisions, Kavayachol. It is the month of ונהפוך הוא אשר ישלחו היהודים המה בשנאייהם.

Why did Haman pick this month of all months? In the timeline of Jewish History, Purim took place when the Jews were a bit confused. They had experienced nearly a millennium of miracles. They learnt to rely on miracles. And now, they were in exile, and dependent on the laws of nature. They were at a spiritual decline. And their only hope was the words of the prophet Yirmiyahu, that after seventy years of exile, G-d would bring them back home to Eretz Yisrael. The Talmud, in Megillah, tells us how the people of the time miscalculated the 70 years, and thought that the time had passed, and that G-d had given up on His People, H"V.

Haman picked this month of Adar, out of all months, for there was no holiday, no miracle in it. Adar is the month in which the leader of the Jews, Moshe Rabbenu, the man who brought miracles to the nation, the man who led the nation into G-dliness, died. Moshe's death in Adar was seemingly a proof to Haman that Jews have times when they are not G-dly. Haman wanted to use this opportunity to make the Jewish people doubt that G-d was really in their midst. (המרה'עז;עמלק=ספק) He wanted to take away our hope in the future.

It did not take long for Haman to learn how mistaken he was. The hope of our nation, the G-dliness of our People, is our connection to Moshe's Torah, not to Moshe himself. Haman came to get Mordechai, to give him a haircut and take him around on the king's horse. He saw that Mordechai was teaching his students the law of the day: it was the 16th of Nissan, the second day of Pesach. The day we bring the Korban HaOmer. Haman expected Mordechai to be teaching the laws of Sh'mad - of יהרג ואל יעבור - in Yeshiva. How one should die, Al Kidush Hashem. But instead, Mordechai was teaching the laws of the Omer that would have been brought on that same day, had the Temple been rebuilt!

"But Mordechai! Don't you read the news? Don't you know that you will all be annihilated? What Omer are you even talking about?" The first thing Haman said to Mordechai was - Mordechai - the handful of flour that you are teaching the students about, to do the Kemitzah, has outweighed the 10k bars of silver that I offered Achashverosh, to annihilate the Jewish Nation!

What does this mean? Mordechai was telling the people to ignore Haman's decree - to have hope that nothing and no one can interfere with the destiny of the Jewish people! The Jewish people are above the Mazal. The word Mazal comes from

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

The Avtinas family had a family secret. They were the only ones who knew how to make the Ketoret, the Temple Incense, in such a way that when it was brought on the Altar, the smoke would rise straight as a beam, and when it hit the ceiling, it would spread evenly over the ceiling and down the walls of the Temple. Majestically. This was due to their secret formula, one that was passed down from father to son. A formula that they would swear to each other not to reveal to a soul, one made from a herb known only to the family, called מעלה עשן, literally, *smoke raiser*. Now, they also hiked up the price for their incense preparation services, and when the Rabbis tried to cut costs on the Temple expenses, they brought in incense experts from Alexandria to make the Ketoret, for a lower price. But the Alexandrian's Ketoret just did not have that majestic effect. The Rabbis wanted the Avtinas family to teach them the secret Ketoret recipe. The Avtinases refused, claiming that they had a family tradition that one day the Temple would be destroyed. If they were to reveal the secret, idol worshippers would eventually gain access to it, and they would serve their gods with our majestic Ketoret. Our Rabbis frowned on their decision.

Now, the family had a beautiful, praiseworthy custom. No woman from the Avtinas family would ever, ever, wear perfume. And, if a woman wanted to marry into the family, the marriage was on condition that she would never, ever wear perfume. Just so that, the people wouldn't say that they used the Temple incense for themselves. והייתם נקיים מה' ומישראל, *And you will keep your (name) blameless with G-d and the Jewish people.* (Bamidbar 32; 22) (Yoma 38a)

Moshe cited the aforementioned passuk to the Tribes that wanted to take possession of land on the other side of the Jordan River. Moshe told them that they could have that land, on condition that they go in to the Land of Israel with the rest of the Tribes, to fight and capture the territory. Moshe

the word *nozel*, that means that things drip from above. Everything that happens drips from above... Except for the Jewish Nation. We can change Heavenly decrees!

was telling them that they had to guard their good name, not giving people the suspicion that they were avoiding battle because of fear. This passuk is the basis for the laws of מראית העין, the law that one needs to avoid casting any impression that his behavior is not in line with the Torah. This concept has almost limitless ramifications in Jewish law. Including laws of using parve milk, fundraising, fish blood, hanging up clothes that got wet on Shabbat, eating kosher food in a non-kosher restaurant, women wearing wigs that are not recognizable by other women as being wigs, etc. All these are subjects that need to be dealt with according to Halacha.

King Solomon, the wisest of men, said ומצא הן ושכל טוב בעיני אלוקים ואדם (Mishlei 3;4) *And he found grace, and good sense, in the eyes of G-d and the eyes of people.* K. Solomon, here, is teaching the secret of grace and charm. In the previous passuk, he says, חסד וְאֱמֶת אֵל יִעֲזְבֶדָּה, קִשְׁרָם עַל גְּרָגְרוֹתֶיהָ, כְּתָבָם עַל לִבָּהּ, *May loving kindness and truth not forsake you. Bind it as a reminder around your neck, write it on the tablet of your heart.* If you constantly, forever remember the kindness G-d and people did for you, you will be gifted with grace and charm. People will like you. People will think of you as a person with common sense. It works like magic. (Try it! It works!) The Talmud Yerushalmi derives from these words of King Solomon that it is important to find favor in the eyes of people (Shekalim 3;2). And, the way to do this is to make sure that *people do not suspect you* of being a person who is not appreciative.

But why? Why does the Torah direct us to be so careful about what people think? Why do I have to care? Why can't I just 'do my own thing'? Isn't caring what people think about me a mistaken outlook? If something I do is totally legal, why do I have to go the extra mile and be concerned about what others think about me or my behavior? Isn't it their responsibility to judge me favorably?

Even if we are not aware of it, every one has an internal drive and sensitivity called in Hebrew "Mah Yagidu", *What people will say*. That means that we are motivated, to a degree, by what people say or will say, about us and our behavior. Even people who say they don't care what others think are usually just desperate to have people think they don't care what people think. It seems that G-d hardwired our subconscious to care about what other people think about us. This is why people take loans they can't pay back, to make a wedding on a standard that they wish they were on. A four hour wedding can put them into two to three years of debt, something that makes no sense. Just because they care so much what people might say, lest they discover their true financial status.

We all have this emotional need to feel accepted, loved and approved of. This lies at the core of self-esteem. Your attitude toward yourself is determined largely by the attitudes that you think other people have toward you. When you believe that other people think highly of you, your level of

self-acceptance and self-esteem goes straight up. However, if you believe, rightly or wrongly, that other people think poorly of you, your level of self-acceptance will plummet. One yeshiva student I was coaching told me something interesting about his own behavior. If he prayed at a very late Minyan, he would hide his Tefillin when he was walking home from Shul. But when he would pray at an early Minyan and stay late to learn after prayer, he did not even notice that he was holding his Tefillin, without hiding it, at 11 a.m. on his way back home!

The name that you make for yourself, the identity that you project to others, is going to eventually be your identity. You see, we all live up to a standard, the standard we chose for ourselves, or whatever standard others expect from us. The first step toward growth is to hold yourself to a higher standard. Make the decision, now, of the standard you want to make yours. And then, project that to the world.

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From the Alexander home Shadiker 7 to Ohalei Yaakov

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