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# Parshas KI TISA

## Getting Closer to Hashem

*The Golden Calf,  
The Circle, The Line*

SELECTED DRASHAS  
FROM  
THE AUTHOR OF  
BILVAVI MISHKAN EVNEH  
THAT HAVE SOMETHING  
TO DO WITH  
THE WEEKLY TORAH  
PORTION

## *Circle of Life*

### *Purim – Rectifying the Sin of the Golden Calf*

The birth and the existence of the Jewish people is based on the event of standing at Har Sinai to receive the Torah, where we uttered “*Naaseh V’Nishmah*”, “We will do and we will hear.” On Purim, there was a renewed acceptance of the Torah. When we stood at Sinai, we were forced to accept the Torah, or else we would die. But on Purim, we accepted the Torah willingly.

The elevation of status we enjoyed at Har Sinai was soon shattered, when we sinned with the golden calf. When we stood at Sinai, we were in a state of revealed G-dliness, and the impurity of the Serpent was removed from us, and we were on a level of Adam before the sin. After the sin with the golden calf, we fell back into the state of sin, and once again were like Adam after the sin. Therefore, on Purim, where we re-accept the Torah, our *avodah* is to find the G-dliness revealed as well as to rectify the sin with the golden calf.

Just as Purim revealed to us a re-acceptance of the Torah, which was at Har Sinai, so is it linked with the sin of the golden calf, which took place after standing at Har Sinai. These events re-occur on Purim, but the order of the events changes. Whereas standing at Har Sinai was first an acceptance of the Torah and then there was a decree of death upon us (which resulted from the sin of the golden calf), on Purim there was first a decree of death upon us and later there was an acceptance of the Torah.

Since the event of standing at Sinai ended with a decree of death of mankind, Purim continues where that point left off – it begins with a decree of death upon mankind, and it is upon us to return to the renewed acceptance of the Torah that we were awakened to.

Thus, the essence of the day of Purim is essentially a return to the event of standing at Sinai, as well as to the sin of the golden calf; except that the order of these events is turned around.

Now we can understand why Chazal say that in the future, all the festivals will cease, except for Purim<sup>1</sup>. It is because Purim is the light of the future, where the sin of Adam will be rectified. It is the future dimension, which will be world in which there is no sin.

This is also the depth of how “Yom Kippur is like Purim”<sup>2</sup>, implying a connection between Purim and Yom Kippur. When we stood at Har Sinai, it was the month of Sivan, and then the Luchos were broken, and then Moshe went up to Heaven again to receive the Luchos, and he came down with them on Yom Kippur. Thus Yom Kippur rectified the sin with the golden calf. Purim, which begins from the decree of death upon us, is a continuation of the rectification on the sin with the Golden Calf.

### *The Concept of Igul (Circle)*

Purim begins with the point we left off with: the sin with the golden calf. The calf, which is “*eigel*” (עגל), is from the word “*igul*” (עיגול), which means “round” or “circular.” If we reflect into the events recorded in Megillas Esther, we can keep seeing this concept of *igul*, of circles.

For example, Achashveirosh ruled from Hodu through Kush, and the Gemara says that just as he ruled over the distance between these two countries, so did he rule from one end of the world to the other. What is the proof that he ruled the entire world, just because he ruled over these two countries? It means

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<sup>1</sup> Midrash Shochar Tov: Mishlei 9:1

<sup>2</sup> Tikkunei HaZohar 57b (tikkun 21).

that he ruled over the entire circle between Hodu and Kush – meaning the entire world. In these words of the Gemara, we see the concept of the *igul*, of circle.

Additionally, the party of Achashveirosh lasted 180 days. The number 180 is equal to the letters פ"ק, from the word הקפה, “inclusive”. This further implies that the agenda of Achashveirosh was to attain a kind of royalty that was circular, all-encompassing, where all the points are included.

In addition, the Midrash<sup>3</sup> states that Achashveirosh took control over the entire world by conquering all of the countries that were outside of the more inner countries, and in this way he gained the inner countries without having to conquer them, because once he had the outer countries, the inner countries were defeated with them as well. The depth of this is that he overcame the world in a “circular” manner, for by conquering the outer countries, he had circled all over the inner countries.

Another hint to this concept is that the very word “*Megillah*” (מגילה) is rooted in the word *igul* (עיגול). A *Megillah* is rolled out from a scroll, hinting to the “roundness” that it coming to reveal. The story of the *Megillah* reveals the holy kind of *igul* (circle) which counters the *igul* on the side of evil, which was the *eigel* (the sin with the golden calf).

(As is well-known, the original sin of mankind, the *Eitz HaDaas*, bears a similarity to the sin with the *eigel hazahav*, the golden calf. They both brought death to the world. The sin with the *Eitz HaDaas* was the root of all sin, and the sin with the golden calf was its branch. We can find an allusion to the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas* from the story of the *Megillah*, which begins from the point where the sin with the Golden Calf leaves us off at [a decree of death]. For example, after Vashti was called, letters were sent out to all the countries that from now on, “every man shall rule in his home” – the new decree was that man would now “rule” over his wife. By the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas*, woman received the curse that man would rule over her, as a punishment upon her for the sin; but this is

not how it was supposed to be, had Chavah never sinned. Another connection between the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas* and the story of the *Megillah* is that Achashveirosh requested that Vashti appear unclothed in front of all the guests. This resembled the sin of Adam and Chavah of being unclothed in front of the Serpent, which aroused its jealousy and caused him to want to kill Adam and take Chavah for a wife.)

### **“*Igul*” in the Side of Holiness & in the Side of Evil**

Let us see more about the concept of *igul* circle.

The Gemara says that if a man is unmarried, he is missing a protective wall<sup>4</sup>, for woman’s task is to “surround” man [and thereby protect him from sin], for it is written, “*Woman surrounds man*”.<sup>5</sup> The miracle of Purim was thus brought about by a woman, for a woman is a “wall”.

In the story of Purim, there was an *igul* (circle) on the side of holiness pitted against the *igul* on the side of impurity [as we will soon explain]. The unholy kind of *igul*, as we explained above, is represented by the party of Achashveirosh.

The Gemara<sup>6</sup> says that when Esther entered the court of Achashveirosh, as soon as she encountered the idols there, the *Shechinah* left her, and she said, “*My G-d, my G-d, why do you abandon me?*” She lost her connection to the *Shechinah*, and she faced a difficulty. This was the same kind of difficulty that the Jewish people as a whole were going through before the sin with the Calf, when they were feeling abandoned by Hashem, thinking that they lost Moshe. On a deeper note, not only was Moshe their leader and the one who took them out of Egypt who performed much miracles for them, but he was also the bridge that connects the Jewish people and their Father in heaven.

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<sup>4</sup> *Yevamos 62b*

<sup>5</sup> *Yirmiyahu 31:21*

<sup>6</sup> *Megillah 15b*

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<sup>3</sup> *Esther Rabbah 1:7*

When *Klal Yisrael* thought that their connection to Hashem via Moshe Rabbeinu was lost, they sought a different means of connection to Hashem. Through Moshe, their bond with Hashem had been through *da'as*, for Moshe is the paradigm of *da'as*. There are three kinds of *da'as*; one of the abilities of *da'as* is that it can differentiate and decide between two possibilities. So a person's *da'as* considers the possibilities. When *Klal Yisrael* thought that their connection to Hashem through *da'as* was now lost, they sought a different kind of connection to Hashem, which does not consider other possibilities. They sought a kind of relationship with Hashem that is *igul*, "circular" - which has no "sides" to it.

But that is where they fell, for they did not reach the holy kind of *igul*, and instead they fell into a kind of "igul" that was impure – the "eigel".

### ***Purim: Finding the Point of Equality in the Soul***

Purim is essentially a day where one can build a space in the soul of a holy kind of "igul" circle. It is a day where there are good and evil forces warring with each other, where the sin with the Golden Calf (the *eigel*, which is the unholy kind of "igul") is pitted against the holy kind of "igul" in a Jew's soul.

The Gemara<sup>7</sup> says that Hashem will make a *machol* (a circular kind of room, like a tunnel) for the righteous in Gan Eden, and each of them will point with his finger and exclaim, "This is Hashem my G-d." A *machol* is round, like an *igul* (a circle), and the *tzaddikim* will all stand within this "circle" and point to Hashem from there.

The concept of the "igul" circle in the side of holiness is thus a perspective in which all points are equal from each other [when viewed from the center], where the distance between each point and another point in the circle is always the same. This is in contrast to a straight line (a *kav*), where the end of the

line is at a greater distance away from the beginning of the line.

### ***Line and Circle***

This represents two dimensions that we have of serving Hashem – "the line" (*kav*) and "the circle" (*igul*).

Moshe received the Torah from Hashem and transmitted it to Yehoshua, and from then on we received the Torah as a *mesorah* (tradition) in a straight, uninterrupted line. This is our *kav*, our line, that connects us to Hashem; the further the generations are from Har Sinai, the greater the distance. Yehoshua was not as close to Hashem as Moshe was, and the Elders were not as close to Hashem as Yehoshua was, and so forth.

But from another angle, it is said, "All of Your nation is righteous."<sup>8</sup> Although no one is similar, and we have our own separate looks and beliefs and abilities, there is a point in which all of us are equal: the fact that Hashem dwells within the heart of each Jew. It is written, "Make for Me a temple, and I shall dwell amongst them"<sup>9</sup>; on this the Sages expound that "Hashem dwells within the heart of each of them." When it comes to that point, all are equal. The differences are only outwardly, for each of us are a different *kli* (container) to hold Hashem's light, but the light of Hashem that dwells in each person is always the same light. Hashem dwells in the heart of a person, for it is written, "The rock of my heart and portion is G-d".<sup>10</sup> The heart of a Jew contains the concept of the *igul* (circle) in the side of holiness.<sup>11</sup>

From the other perspective, *kav* line, there is always a system of ten points. There are ten expressions that Hashem created the world with; ten

<sup>8</sup> *Yeshayahu* 60:21

<sup>9</sup> *Shemos* 25:8

<sup>10</sup> *Tehillim* 73:26

<sup>11</sup> For an explanation of how the heart represents *igul* (the circle), refer to the Hebrew *sefer* where this translation is adapted from: ספר בלבבי משכן אבנה פורים - עמ' כט

<sup>7</sup> In the end of Tractate Taanis

commandments; and so forth. But from the perspective of *igu*Λcircle, we can reach the heart's perspective, where Hashem's presence is contained, and all points are contained in one point.

From the view of our outer layers, which is outer components and unique abilities that differ from one another, we are each a different *kli* (container). The *kli* of each person is different from one another. Each person has a different *da'as*, a different way of thinking, and this is the angle of *daas*\Moshe\kav. But from view of the inner light that is contained within each of our souls, we are all equal, when viewed from that point. That is the depth of how all the *tzaddikim* in the future will stand amidst a "circle" and point to Hashem – because when it comes to our bond with Hashem, in that aspect, everyone is equally connected and contained in one point.

When a person does not stand in that "circle", he is stuck inside his own ego, always concerned for his own "I", always trying to know: "Who is the real me?"

But when a person is more concerned about Who we are trying to reveal, and he is not as concerned about his own "I" but about the One who dwells inside him – and He is within each and every Jew, without any exceptions, for His oneness cannot be divided or changed – in that point, all are equal. There are only differences between us on our outer layers, but when we consider the fact that Hashem dwells inside each person, in that point, we find the point where every soul is equal in.

### ***Daas and Above Daas***

The *halachah* on Purim is that "One is obligated to become inebriated on Purim, until he does not know the difference between "Cursed is Haman" with "Blessed is Mordechai." What is the depth of this? And if the truth is that Mordechai is blessed and Haman is cursed, why must one reach the point where he does not know this?

It is along the lines of what we explained above. [We have two angles of connection to Hashem – the

straight line, and the circle]. One angle is *da'as*, represented by the chain of tradition which we received through Moshe, in a straight and continuous line. But Purim is not about *da'as*. That is why one must reach the point on Purim where he doesn't have *daas*, where he does not know the difference between "Blessed is Mordechai" and "Cursed is Haman". At Har Sinai, we received the Torah through Moshe [which represented our relationship to Hashem through *daas*], but on Purim, we reached a point [above *daas*] that resembles the *tzaddikim* in the future when they are all pointing their finger at Hashem and saying, "*This is my G-d that I hoped for.*"

We will explain this deeper. At Har Sinai, there were two aspects. One aspect of it was that "Hashem descended upon the mountain of Sinai"<sup>12</sup> - in other words, that He revealed Himself there. The other aspect of it was the giving of the Torah. The Torah was means that reveals Hashem upon the world. By Har Sinai, the emphasis was on the Torah that we received; in other words, it was about our *daas* [which is different with each person]. But on Purim, the emphasis was placed more on the "Giver" that is behind the Torah, and that we all receive from the Giver (Hashem). With regards to that aspect, all of us are equal.

We know that the face of each person is different. A deeper reason for this is because each person has a different *daas*, and the face is called "*panim*", for it reveals the "*pnim*" (the inwardness) of the person, and since each person's *daas* is different, it shows up differently on each person's face; resulting in different faces throughout mankind. Thus there is a connection between *daas*\knowledge and differences. So on a deep note, as long as a person "knows" the difference between Mordechai and Haman, he is still within the perspective of his *daas*, and there he sees the differences. But when a person becomes inebriated to the point where he "does not know the difference between Mordechai and Haman", there he reveals an even more inner point in himself, which is above his

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<sup>12</sup> *Shemos 19:20*

*daas*. There, in that very innermost point, everything and everyone is equal...

### ***Above The Self***

For this reason, the decree of Haman upon the Jewish people was to destroy all of the nation, men women and children, and all in one day. His agenda was to do it all on all-inclusive level, and he didn't want to do it gradually and in steps; he wanted to wipe all the Jews out at once.

Our salvation was of a similar nature, where we all accepted the Torah again willingly; all of us, with no exceptions. It is understandable that we all accepted the Torah at Har Sinai, where we were all forced. But how does an entire nation willingly accept the Torah? How can everyone want the same thing? The answer to this is that indeed, if it would depend on a person's *daas*, then no one would be able to want the same thing, for every person has a different *daas*. But when we dig deeper into our soul and we go above the point of our *daas*, there we can find a common *ratzon* (will) that everyone will share.

At Har Sinai, it was a revelation of the Torah, of *daas*. And since each person has a different *daas*, we all needed to be forced into accepting the Torah. But on Purim, it was revealed the secret inner unity within the soul, where there are no differences, and all is equal. Besides of what was revealed at Har Sinai (the Torah), Purim revealed a deeper point in a Jew's soul: the idea that one can leave his own self!

It is this point which is the deep *avodah* of a Jew's entire life. When Hashem created the world, He created it with ten *levushim*, "garments" (also called *keilim*, "containers), and all people are essentially the "garments" that Hashem wears, which wraps around His existence.<sup>13</sup> When one lives through the perspective of his *daas*, that means he is only busy trying to identify himself, for *daas* is essentially the way of how a person identifies "Who I am." If we

want to define what a person is, the way to define it is, by how deep his *daas* goes.

Although we often hear many different definitions of the true inner self of a person which differ from this, that is only because the "I" has been so cheapened, and people only identify its superficial layers. If we want to define the deepest point of a person, what the "I" is, it is the *daas*. One's *daas* is his very "I." The other parts of the self are all but expressions of one's inner *daas*.

However, the purpose of Creation is not for us to reach our "I". It is rather to turn our "*ani*" (I) into "*ayin*" (nothingness), which enables us to reach the true "I", Who is the Creator.

The view from one's *daas* is thus the expression of his "I". When we build our *daas*, we are building our "I", and that is one side of our *avodah*. But in order to reach the Creator completely, we need to reach a point where we are able to remove ourselves from our own "I." It is written, "*I* (אני) stand between Hashem and you"<sup>14</sup>, and there is a well-known interpretation of this verse that the "אני" (the "I") of a person, is what divides him from the Creator.<sup>15</sup>, so to speak.

### ***Haman Wanted To Destroy Our Deeper Essence***

How indeed can we reach the point in ourselves that is above our own *daas*? How do we penetrate into this inner light?

This is the secret of the concept of *igul* (circle). Having the perspective that comes from standing amidst the "circle" is what reveals true unity between our brethren. Superficially, this is called *ahavat haberiyot* (love for others), and this is also true, but there is much more to *ahavas Yisrael*, a much deeper meaning. *Ahavas Yisrael* is about reaching the point [in the soul, inwardly], where all are equal. Only at that point is true unity revealed.

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<sup>14</sup> Devarim 5:5

<sup>15</sup> Meor V'Shemesh, *ibid*

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<sup>13</sup> P'sach Eliyahu; based on Tikkunei HaZohar 17a

How do we reach that point? Let us reflect into the following.

From what age does a person receive *daas*? The clarity of *daas* can only be received at 20 years of age. One is considered to be capable of *daas* at either 13 for a boy or 12 for a girl. A child younger than that has no *daas*. Haman wanted to destroy all Jews, including children. He also wanted to destroy anyone who didn't have *daas*. Simply speaking, this was a decree to destroy all of the Jewish people. But his deeper agenda was because he wasn't trying to attack us at our point of *daas*. He wanted to destroy even the point in us that is above our *daas*.

This is in contrast with Bilaam, who also tried to destroy the Jewish people. Bilaam is Moshe's equal in the side of impurity, equal to Moshe in prophecy. Bilaam wanted to attack us at our *daas*, which is represented by Moshe. That is one way to start up with *Klal Yisrael*. But there is a deeper kind of war against *Klal Yisrael*. Haman was trying to attack us on a totally different level, a much deeper level. He argued to Achashveirosh that we are "one" nation who did not behave like other nation. He was not picking on the fact that there are differences within the Jewish people; rather, he was attacking our oneness, our unity. He wanted to destroy the entire Jewish people all in "one" day, which hints to his attack on our own oneness.

This was very unlike the war of the Greek nation against *Klal Yisrael*, who were trying to influence our *chochmah* (wisdom) to think like them. When it comes to our *chochmah*, we each think differently because we each have our own *daas*. But Haman wanted to destroy us precisely because of our inner oneness. He was fighting us at a plane that is beyond *daas*.

It is thus said of Amalek (ancestor of Haman), "*There is war of Hashem against Amalek, from generation to generation*".<sup>16</sup> Amalek is at war with G-d. Why is this the definition of Amalek's war? It is because the Jewish people are one nation who are

unified under their connection with Hashem. There is nothing in creation that is absolutely one; the only "one" in Creation is Hashem's oneness, and those who attempt to fight the oneness of the Jewish people are really trying to fight the oneness of Hashem.

In the point of our *daas*, there is no oneness in the Jewish people, for everyone's *daas* is different. But Haman and Achashveirosh were fighting the point of oneness in the Jewish people, where we are indeed connected under one unit. This was not a war against our *daas*, which would only be against our outer layer; it was a war against the "oneness" that is in the Jewish people, which comes from the light of Hashem – thus it was a war against the oneness of Hashem. The light of *echad* (oneness) is the Infinite Light of Hashem; Hashem is called the One Almighty Who Is Individual; and Hashem is called "*Hashem echad*", "Hashem is one". Haman was aware of our oneness and he was using it to attack us, because he was trying to reveal our aspect of "oneness" in the side of evil [by getting the entire people to bow down to him].

We see that when Mordechai didn't bow to Haman, Haman became enraged. Why did it bother Haman so much that one Jew doesn't want to bow down to him? It was because Haman was trying to attack us through revealing our "oneness" in the side of evil, which he was trying to accomplish through getting everyone to bow down to him. Now that one Jew wasn't bowing down to him, it was foiling his plans, because it meant that there was a breach in our unity. He would only have power over us if he could get us all to bow down to him, so if even one Jew isn't bowing to him, he couldn't have power over us. That was why he was so enraged.

After he became enraged at Mordechai, he planned a gallows of 50 *amos* high to hang Mordechai on. Why specifically did he want it to be 50 *amos*? The deeper meaning behind this is because there are "50 gates of understanding" in the world<sup>17</sup>, which is the inner structure that Hashem has designed the world with. When Haman wanted to hang Mordechai on a

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16 *Shemos* 17:15

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17 *Rosh HaShanah* 21b

gallows that was 50 *amos* high, it was because he wanted to destroy all of this inner structure of the 50 gates of understanding. By hanging Mordechai, he hoped to destroy the “oneness” that is the root all of the 50 gates of understanding.

Haman also gave the plan to have all the Jews destroyed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, and 13 is equal to the letters *yud* (י) and *gimmel* (ג), which is equal to the word *echad* (אחד) (one), because he was trying to fight us through oneness. Haman wanted to destroy us on the grounds that we are all one nation.

The fact that his plans were foiled shows us that the light that was revealed on Purim is the inner light of our “oneness”.

### ***Our Avodah On Purim – Reaching The Point of “Oneness” In The Soul***

It is easy to talk about this concept of oneness, but there is a deep *avodah* we have to reach this place of oneness in our own souls. It is not an easy task to penetrate past all of the layers in the soul and to get to the deepest layer of the soul, which is the “oneness” that resides within us.

On Purim, we penetrate into our souls, using external means [intoxication], but there is really an inner work we need to do along with this. The outer tool we use for this is the intoxication, where we become inebriated to the point where we do not know the difference between “Blessed is Mordechai” and “Cursed is Haman.” The wine erases our daas, and when we have no daas, we can get in touch with the inner root of the soul, the point where all souls are equal in.

That all concerns the physical action of our *avodah* on Purim; now let us explain, with *siyata d’shmaya*, of how we can dig very deep into the soul and reach the inner perspective of “oneness” which we are describing here.

### ***The Secret Which The Wine Reveals***

Chazal state, “When wine enters, the secret come forth.”<sup>18</sup> A “secret” is not merely something that you choose to hide from revealing to someone. Such a secret is only a “secret” due to circumstantial factors. The only true “secret” is something which can never be revealed. A secret is described as “Your mouth is blocked from speaking of it.”<sup>19</sup> There is a deep place in the soul which is called “The heart is not revealed to the mouth.”<sup>20</sup> It is a deep perspective in the soul, and it exists in the depths of each and every Jew’s soul. This deep place in the soul is called a “secret”.

What does it mean, then, that “when wine enters, the secret come forth?” If “secrets” come out, then they are not really secrets, because a secret is only something which can never be revealed. So what are the “secrets” that can come out through intoxication? The depth of the matter is that the “secrets” which can come forth from oneself, via the intoxication of wine, are secrets that can always remain as secrets. It is the “secret” that is in every Jew’s soul: “Hashem is one and His name is one” – and this oneness is called “*Kneses Yisrael*”, the collective unit of the Jewish people.

This point is hidden from most people, because it is so deep in the soul, and not only is it hidden from others, it is often hidden from the person himself. When “wine enters, secret come forth”, this does not mean that a person tells these secrets to another. It means that the “secret” becomes revealed to the person himself.

Achashveirosh served wine for seven days after the meal that lasted for 180 days, and the Gemara says that each person had served to him wine which was older than him<sup>21</sup>; every person had wine which preceded his own birth. In this statement, Chazal are hinting to us about the “secret” of the soul, which is **above** one’s “I” – the root of the “I”. When the point

<sup>18</sup> *Eruvin* 65a

<sup>19</sup> *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:7

<sup>20</sup> *Kohel* Rabbah 12:9

<sup>21</sup> *Megillah* 12a

above the “I” is revealed to a person, the “secret” of the soul is revealed within him.

This is the depth of “When wine enters, the secret comes forth”: it can be revealed to a person the very root of his essence. Thus, the “secret” that is meant to be revealed on Purim is not about revealing the “I” itself. If that would be the point, then each person at the party would have drunk a wine that was made on the day he was born. But that is not what they drank. They drank a wine that preceded their day of birth, which hints to us that the “secret” revealed to the one who drinks the wine is, the revelation of the point **above** the “I.”

Achashveirosh was trying to reveal this “secret” in the side of evil, through the wine that he served them during these seven days after his grand feast. But in the side of holiness, we have an *avodah* on Purim that parallels this concept: through the wine on Purim, we are meant to reveal within us the presence of the Individual One of the world. Hashem’s oneness resides in the point deep in the soul that is above the “I” of a person. Purim is about penetrating past our very “I” – and to get further and further into **the areas of our soul that are beyond the “I”** (ego\self).

### ***The “I” Is The Ratzon\Will***

Until now we have explained how the light of Purim is above the point of our *daas*. Now we will explain, with *siyata d’shmaya*, of how the light of Purim is also above the point of our *ratzon* (will).

It is written, “*Make for Me a temple, and I will dwell amongst them*”<sup>22</sup>. The *Nefesh HaChaim*<sup>23</sup> and the *Alshich*<sup>24</sup> both explain that the possuk does not say “amongst him” but “amongst them”, which shows us that Hashem dwells in each Jew. If so, the possuk is saying that Hashem wanted that the heart of each Jew should become a sanctuary where His presence (the *Shechinah*) will reside.

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<sup>22</sup> *Shemos* 25:8

<sup>23</sup> *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:4

<sup>24</sup> *Alshich al HaTorah, Shemos* 25:8

The Sages said that in the seven-day feast which Achashveirosh hosted for the Jews [where he served them wine that preceded their birthdays], he used the vessels of the *Beis HaMikdash*.<sup>25</sup> The depth behind his agenda was because he was really trying to reveal the point in a Jew’s soul that is “above the I”, in the side of evil [by getting everyone to partake in his party and by getting them to reveal what their truest, innermost desires were].

But Achashveirosh’s plan couldn’t work, because since he was a person who did not have a recognition of the Creator, he thought that the deepest part of a Jew’s soul is the point of *ratzon*\will [and he didn’t know that there is a point in a Jew’s soul which is beyond the conscious *ratzon* of the person]. Achashveirosh gave the order that all of the wine be served “according to each person’s wish” – according to each person’s *ratzon*. He thought that the essence of the soul is the *ratzon*, and by getting them to have an evil *ratzon* to partake joyously in his party, he thought he could ruin them at their very core.

The “I” of a person (the self) is his *ratzon* (will), but the deeper part of the soul lies beyond the “I”. It is the light of the Creator in the Jew’s soul, and Achashveirosh was unaware of this layer of the soul. He could only get the Jews to sin at the level of *ratzon* [by getting them to pursue gluttony and to want it].

Ultimately, he did not succeed in getting them all to have a unified *ratzon* for evil. This is because the *ratzon* of each person is different, and it is only Hashem, in His Infinite Light, Who can unify and equalize everything. Achashveirosh was trying to equalize everyone by showing how all of us had the same evil *ratzon*. But his mistake was that he didn’t realize was that he was trying to do something that was impossible.

The light revealed on Purim is thus a point that not only transcends anything that can become “divisive”; it transcends our *daas* (logical perception) and it transcends our *ratzon*\will [for both our *daas* and *ratzon* are divisive aspects].

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<sup>25</sup> *Esther Rabbah* 2:11

### *Purim – Getting Past Our Ratzon*

It is well-known that the *gematria*<sup>26</sup> of “Moshe” is equal to “ratzon”.<sup>27</sup> As we have been explaining, Purim revealed a level that is beyond *ratzon*. This was also the perspective which the people were trying to gain in making the golden calf. They thought that Moshe was dead, so they wanted to have a bond with Hashem that was beyond *ratzon*: they wanted to have a “circular” relationship with Hashem (“*igul*”), a point where all people have an equal relationship with Hashem. They wanted to reveal this point of equality, and this is what they were trying to show by making the *eigel* (the golden calf), which is from the word “*igul*”. [Their intentions were holy, but ultimately, it led to an action of sin].

On Purim, this perspective was revealed in a holy manner. On Purim, this inner point was revealed, in which are all equal in; this is reflected by the fact that on Purim, we penetrate past our *ratzon*, by removing our *retzonos* [via intoxication]. When one removes his *retzonos*, he can get in touch with the reality of the Creator.

### *Two Aspects of Our Relationship With Hashem: The Mitzvos, and The Unconditional Love*

This is because there are two aspects in the relationship between *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and the Jewish people. One aspect of it is to fulfill the *mitzvos*, which fulfills the will of the Creator, and through that, we bond with Hashem. A second aspect of our bond with Hashem is, “A Jew, even when he sins, is still a Jew.” Hashem loves each member of the Jewish people even if, *chas v’shalom*, he is not doing His will.

Therefore, the bond between Hashem and the Jewish people exists on two levels. One level of the bond is through the *mitzvos*. A person bonds with Hashem through doing the *mitzvos*, which are

Hashem’s will. Each morning in the blessings before *Shema*, we express our acceptance of His will upon us. The second level of the bond we have with Hashem, though, is unconditional. It is like how a son is his father’s child regardless of what he does – he is always the child of his father, and it doesn’t depend on anything he does.

One needs to build these two levels in his soul. We need to do the *mitzvos* so that we can attain the level of the bond with Hashem that is available to us through doing the *mitzvos*, where we are fulfilling His will. But along with this, we also need another aspect in our relationship with Hashem – and it is not a replacement, *chas v’shalom*, to the first level; but it must rather go hand-in-hand with the first level: one needs to also have a bond with the Creator regardless of the actions that he does. One must ultimately feel towards Hashem that “I am Your son, and You are my father.”

So on one hand, one needs to build a bond with the Creator through doing the *mitzvos*, and along with this, one needs to also enjoy a father-son relationship with Hashem – while making sure not to become lax, *chas v’shalom*, in keeping any part of the Torah: **a Jew must know that he is loved, on an intrinsic level, by the Creator of the world. A Jew is Hashem’s child, and he is a part of Him, so to speak.**

The redemption we had on Pesach prepared us to receive the Torah, where we would receive the *mitzvos*. We declared “*Naaseh V’Nishma*” there and that made us eligible to receive the Torah. This meant that we were making our *ratzon* subservient to the Creator’s will. But the redemption we had on Purim was a new aspect in our relationship with Hashem. It was a re-acceptance of the Torah, which was also done with *ratzon*, and the depth of this was that we became desirous (*retzuyah*, from the word *ratzon*) to Hashem. When we re-accepted the Torah on Purim, it didn’t give us more *mitzvos* than what we received at Har Sinai; our obligation in the *mitzvos* did not change, and indeed, it cannot be ever be forsaken, *chas v’shalom*. But the “*ratzon*” we revealed on Purim was

<sup>26</sup> numerical value in Hebrew

<sup>27</sup> *gematria* equals 345 and *ratzon* equals 346. There is a rule in *gematria* called “*am hakolet*” that the numbers can still be 1 off and yet there is still a parallel.

that we revealed this point that Hashem always desires the Jewish people in every situation. So it doesn't mean simply that they now accepted the Torah again willingly. Rather, they revealed how the One who gave the Torah always wants them.

A person understands simply that if he does the will of Hashem, then Hashem will want him, and if he doesn't do the will of Hashem *chas v'shalom*, then Hashem doesn't want him. But Hashem always desires every Jew. The prophet states that at the time of redemption, all Jews will return, and no Jew will be left behind.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the light revealed on Purim is really the light of future redemption. The future redemption is not only for those who did Hashem's will; it is not selective. Rather, every Jew is called Hashem's child, and he is included in the redemption; it is not possible for any Jew to be left out of it, as the prophet guarantees. The light of the redemption in the future is not dependent on the actions that a Jew has done.

Purim is the source of this light. On Purim, there was a decree of death on all Jews, and the redemption than was experienced by everyone, without any exceptions. It didn't depend on how worthy their actions were.

(However, we need to emphasize that in addition to the light which is not dependent on our actions, there is also a light that is dependent on our actions. So we need to contain both of these two lights at once, and they go hand-in-hand with each other. Compare this to having a father and mother. A person cannot come from only a father or only a mother; he needs to come from both. The same goes for our bond with Hashem. We cannot say that there is only one kind of bond with Hashem, in which a person is always connected to Hashem even if he doesn't do His will. Rather, we need both the aspects of doing His will and having an unconditional relationship with Him, in the same way that we need both a father and a mother.)

Purim revealed the deeper aspect of our bond with Hashem: that our relationship with Hashem goes above logic, for it is not dependent on any reason. The Sages said that the Jewish people then were deserving of the decree, either because they enjoyed Achashveirosh's party or because they bowed to the idols then. In what merit, then, were we saved from the decree? From a deep perspective, there were no merits that saved us! It was simply because we were Hashem's children!

When we realized that this was the nature of our salvation, we were able to come to an entirely new acceptance of the Torah, where we realized that we are connected to the Creator in every situation.

### ***“I dwell amongst them amidst their impurity”***

This is the secret behind the concept of the *“igul”* (the point of “circular” relationship with Hashem, in which all points are equal) which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In the future, when all [*tzaddikim*] will point to Hashem and say, “This is Hashem, which we hoped for”, how can they all do this? If it were to depend on their actions, everyone would be different from each other. But it is not dependent on one's actions that he did. Rather, it is like the Baal Shem Tov taught: “Hashem loves each Jew as if he is His only child”.<sup>29</sup> In that aspect, it can be said that all Jews were created “equal”.

When we realize that we are each loved intrinsically by Hashem, and that this does not depend on our actions, this is where the secret of “oneness” in the soul is revealed.

Now we will explain how we can practically live by these concepts in our day-to-day life.

Each person, to a certain degree, has an aspect in which there is a “decree of death” upon him, just as in the times of Purim. We are referring to the part in the soul in which feels that he is disconnected from the

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<sup>28</sup> *Shmuel II 14:14*

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<sup>29</sup> *Keser Shem Tov (Chabad), hosafos, p.167*

Creator. How can a person remove that disconnection?

On one hand, he needs to do the *mitzvos*, and along with this, he also needs to realize the verse, “*I dwell amongst them in their impurity.*”<sup>30</sup> If a person can pull himself together and believe that that even as he has become disconnected from the Creator *chas v’shalom*, because he commits sins, yet he still feels deep down that there is always a connection to the Creator – from there will come his salvation. He should continue to do the *mitzvos*, for as we explained earlier, we need both aspects in our bond with Hashem: to realize that we have an unconditional with Him, and to do His will through observing the *mitzvos*. We cannot have one without the other, we need both.

There are thus two parts of returning to Hashem. One part of it is to renew our commitment to observing the *mitzvos*; that spurs us on to *teshuvah*. Another part of it is to believe that even through sin causes us to become disconnected from Hashem, we are still always connected to Him, on an intrinsic level. That reveals a spiritual light within our souls, which spurs on us to do His *mitzvos* as well.

### ***Two Ways of Accepting The Torah***

When Hashem redeemed the Jewish people from Egypt, He revealed His presence to them on the night of Pesach, which was a revelation that was beyond their current level. Then there was a preparation to receive the Torah at Har Sinai, and then Hashem revealed Himself to them in order for them to receive the Torah. Chazal state that the entire existence of Creation was depending on the acceptance of the Torah by the Jewish people; if they wouldn’t accept the Torah, the world would go back to nothingness and desolation.<sup>31</sup>

But there is a deeper point than this [which was revealed on Purim]: a person can be connected to the

Creator in every situation, and when he feels that connection, he can then come to a willing acceptance of the Torah. This is what happened on Purim. If a person feels this connection – which is what Purim is all about – he will surely accept the Torah in all its details, all its *halachos*, in all of their nuances.

Thus, there are two aspects of how a person accepts the Torah. One aspect of it comes from the *ratzon* (will) of a person to come closer to Hashem, and another aspect of it is to feel already close, and as a direct result of feeling this intrinsic closeness, a person realizes that he needs to accept the will of His King upon him.

At Har Sinai, the people accepted the Torah out of a will to come close to the Creator, and from their *ratzon*, they received the Torah. On one hand, the Sages state that Hashem forced them to accept the Torah, by suspending the mountain over the air above them, but on the other hand, they accepted the Torah in order to become closer to Hashem, for they were already preparing for the Torah by standing at a distance.

They knew that in order to become close to Hashem, they must accept the Torah.

But on Purim, the opposite happened. They accepted the Torah then out of realizing that their intrinsic closeness with Hashem, and because they felt the closeness, they automatically came to accept Hashem’s will upon them. This is the meaning of how they willingly re-accepted the Torah.

They revealed the aspect of the bond with Hashem in which we are always desirous to Hashem, even if *chas v’shalom* we sin; that we are never apart from Him.

After we revealed this inner aspect of our bond with Hashem, we were then able to accept the Torah again upon us – because we realized that we are *already* close to Hashem to begin with.

<sup>30</sup> Bamidbar 16:16

<sup>31</sup> Yalkut Shimeoni Tehillim 75: 811

### ***Conditional Bond With Hashem Vs. Unconditional Bond With Hashem***

There is a deep way with which how a Jew can approach life with. If a person wants to have a bond with the Creator, how can he go about attaining it?

One way to build a relationship with Hashem is through the *mitzvos*, and through *davening* to Hashem to become close to Him. This is true, but along with this, a person also needs something else, which is a totally opposite perspective: he should believe that Hashem is found next to him, every single moment! It is a reality that does not change, which is not dependent on how he acts. When one believes that Hashem is actually next to Him all the time, he will then find it impossible to go against Hashem's will. With this attitude, his bond with Hashem is not dependent on any reason.

If a person feels that his bond with Hashem is dependent on a reason (on the actions he does), then he is trying to have a relationship with Hashem based on *daas*. But a deep bond with Hashem is formed from the point that is above our *daas*.

It is like the verse, *"Just as water reflects a face, so does the heart of a man to another"*. If we ask a person: "Why do you love Hashem? And why do you think Hashem loves you?" and he answers "I love Hashem because he does so many good things for me, and Hashem loves me because I fulfill His *mitzvos* very well", this is called a bond of "conditional love" with Hashem. A different perspective entirely would be that a person has no question at all of why Hashem loves or why he loves Hashem. It is reality to him and therefore it is not a question to him.

If one can reach this place in his soul in which his love towards Hashem is not dependent on any reason, he has revealed a love for Hashem that can never cease; it is a love that does not depend on any condition to keep it going. When one has only a bond of conditional love with Hashem, his bond with Hashem will weaken at some point. But when one reveals a love for Hashem (and he feels Hashem's love

for him) that is unconditional, not dependent on any reason – such a bond will never cease.

### ***Purim – The Day To Form An Unconditional Bond With the Creator***

Purim is essentially a day which is meant for one to build this unconditional bond with Hashem. This is in contrast with the rest of the festivals, which reflect our bond with Hashem that is dependent on certain reasons. We need this aspect as well, and we cannot do without it, *chas v'shalom*. But along with it, we also need to build a relationship with Hashem which is not dependent on any reason. Why does Hashem love a person? It does not depend on any reason. Why does a person love Hashem? It should not either depend on any given reason. It is like asking how we know if there is a Creator. There is no room for this question, because it is a plain reality, just as no one questions how he does he know if he exists.

One needs to penetrate deeply into his soul. He first should realize that the Creator is within him, for it is written, *"I dwell amongst them in their impurity"* – even if his actions make him deserving of destruction. One should deepen this *emunah peshutah* (simple belief) that Hashem is with him, just as He was with Moshe Rabbeinu, and that this is not dependent on any particular reason. It is simply a gift from Hashem, and this is how Hashem has designed our souls. Just as Hashem was with Moshe Rabbeinu, so is He with every Jew – even in the final generation.

There is a well-known question: How will Mashiach come in the final generation, which is the most undeserving generation possible? The answer is clear and simple. In earlier generations, there was plenty of reason for him to come; they were more deserving, they had more *zechusim* (merits), so if he were to come then, people would say that it was due to a certain reason that he came. Then it would mean that our bond with Hashem depends on certain reasons. But in our times, in the final generations, there is no reason that we are deserving of Mashiach. That is precisely why he will come in the final

generation – because then it will be clear that his arrival didn't depend on any certain reason.

That is the light of the future, revealed on Purim: Our bond with the Creator does not depend on anything! The Jewish people accept Hashem's decrees upon them because they realize their closeness with Him. Even if a person committed every last sin, G-d forbid, he cannot ever become disconnected from Hashem. A son who rebels against his father is still called his son. Perhaps he has the status of a "wayward child", but he is still called the father's child. Even by a wayward child (*ben sorer u'moreh*), the Torah says that he has a father and mother, because he is still called their son.

### ***Purim – Above Our Daas***

In our relationship with the Creator, one needs to dig very deep into his soul and reach this point of an "unconditional bond" with Hashem. That is where the secret of "oneness" is found in the soul. When a person's bond with Hashem is dependent on a reason to keep it going, there is no oneness, because if the condition for the bond isn't met, the person is not "one" with Hashem and instead there are "two" – for he feels apart from Hashem. But if one has the aspect of unconditional love with Hashem, he has revealed the "oneness" between him and Hashem – forever.

Haman said, "*There is a nation that is spread out and scattered throughout the nations.*"<sup>32</sup> On a deep level, he is the evil, accusing voice that says that our bond with Hashem is conditional and that it can be severed, *chas v'shalom*. He also wanted to destroy all of the Jewish people on one day, because he was trying to reveal a "oneness" in the side of evil, in order to counter the "oneness" in the side of holiness. That was how he planned on getting rid of the "oneness" on the side of holiness.

We defeat his perspective on Purim, when we become intoxicated to the point that we do not know

the difference between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed Is Mordechai"; when we lose our *daas*. A drunken person is exempt from *mitzvos*, like an insane person, who does not have to keep the *mitzvos*. This is the secret of Purim! Of course, as soon as the intoxication wears off, we return to our obligation in *mitzvos*. But the point of this intoxication on Purim is to teach us how to form a bond with Hashem without our *daas*, when we are not obligated in *mitzvos*.

### ***Beyond Our Obligatory Level***

The Gemara has a discussion: Who is greater – someone who doesn't have to do the *mitzvos* and he does them anyway, or someone who is obligated in the *mitzvos* and he does them? At first, Rav Yosef thought that a person who does the *mitzvos* when he's not obligated is greater, and in the end, the Gemara brings proof that it is the opposite: the one who is obligated in *mitzvos* and does them, is greater, and he gets more reward than a person who is not obligated in *mitzvos* who does them.<sup>33</sup>

Although the conclusion of the Gemara is different than the original understanding, we know that there is always truth to even an original understanding of the Gemara, so there is truth to either of these opinions in the Gemara. We can learn from this that there is a bond with Hashem attained through being obligated in the *mitzvos* and doing them, and there is also a bond with Hashem we can attain that is not dependent on our obligation in *mitzvos*.

According to Rav Yosef's original understanding, it is a deeper level to have a bond with Hashem when one is not obligated in *mitzvos* and he does them anyway. This shows a deeper bond that the person has with Hashem which goes beyond the level of obligation – the kind of bond with Hashem that is unconditional.

We can understand it in the same way that a mother loves her newborn baby – there is no

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32 Esther 3:8

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33 Kiddushin 31a

particular reason that she loves him other than the fact that it is her child.

*Translated from the original Hebrew shiur:* פוריים  
ענין העיגול בפורים – 006

### ***In Conclusion***

The depth of our life is to reach the point where our bond with the Creator is not dependent on any particular reason or circumstance. And when one loves Hashem unconditionally, he will feel this bond on a constant basis. The bond that he feels with this will cause him to have a constant desire, in turn, to always want to do the *mitzvos* of the Torah. In every situation, this person will always feel his bond with Hashem.

There is a lot more to say about this point, and it cannot be explained entirely in one *derasha*. Our hope here is that you have formed the basis in yourself to want this and search for this. To find the absolute level of connection with Hashem which knows no pause.

The Sages say that the other festivals will all cease in the future, and one of the reasons for this is because they are all dependent on various factors. When the reason for the festival is no longer here, there is no more reason to have the festival. But Purim is of a different dimension than the rest of the festivals. It is based on our bond with Hashem that is not dependent on any reason, and that is the deeper reason of why Purim cannot cease.

Reaching this point is a deep, inner journey to traverse in the soul. One needs to first believe in the concept, and from his simple *emunah* in this he will be led to reaching this point, where he can know and feel that our existence is eternally attached with Hashem's.

The more that people will believe in these words, the more this perspective will be shined within ourselves, and the light from inside our souls can then radiate outward to the rest of the world. That light will have the potency to cause a return of the Jewish people for the better, when the righteous *Mashiach* can come speedily in our days. Amen.