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Purim - Making Your Family Happier in Adar

קטע מ"דע את משפחתך" 09_

(a section adapted from 'Getting To Know Your Family' 09_Infusing Spirituality Into The Home - Part 2

Let's say it is Purim, and you want to teach your children what Purim is about, how they can be affected by Purim. You can ask them the following: "What are people doing in Gan Eden on this day?" Think about what they are doing on Purim in Gan Eden! (If a person don't care about what's going on in Gan Eden, that shows how far he is from a true life, because the way of life in Gan Eden shows you how true life should look like.) What's going on in Gan Eden on Purim? They are sending *mishloach manos* to each other? They are reading *Megillah*?

Chazal say that there are ten expression of *simcha* (joy). So in Gan Eden, new depth to *simcha* keeps being revealed. If one isn't revealing it, he is in Gehinnom! In Gan Eden, there are always new revelations.

The Purim of 5773 is a different Purim than 5772. But with most people, Purim in 5773 is the same Purim as it was in 5772 and in the year before it...

We are comprised of a body and soul, as we live here on this world. Therefore our body misleads us on this world and tricks us from the true reality. In Gan Eden, there is only a soul - the body cannot mislead us there. When the month of Adar comes in Gan Eden, the souls are receiving new depth to Adar and Purim. That is the perspective we need to have to.

What happens when it comes the month of Adar? People are trying new ideas and tricks. Where does this come from? Does it come from Judaism?!

Our *simcha* must not be superficial. When people live superficially, they think they have to do all kinds of funny things during the month of Adar, and they think that this is the will of Hashem and the way of the Torah!

Let's talk very practically now. How would you like to have a real *simcha* this year when it comes the month of Adar? How can you make your family happy? People react to this sheepishly: "What do you want from? I don't know how to be happy myself. How am I supposed to be happier during the month of Adar?" Instead, people are worrying about the monetary expenses he will have to make for Purim

this year...

What is the *simcha* you need to have in Adar? How do you plan to improve your home? You learn Torah, *Baruch Hashem*, but how does your home look? How is the atmosphere there – it is happier during Adar? Did anything change since last Adar?

The husband does not have *simcha*; how will his wife be happy? From drawing pictures of Haman? How will the children be happy? If both the father and mother are not happy in Adar, neither will the children be. They are both busy with various ideas for Purim, like who they will send *mishloach manos* to, and they are both caught up in the preparations. The father does not have *simcha*, and the wife is busy enabling her husband to learn Torah, *Baruch Hashem*, and raising the children – so she has no time to develop her happiness. What does she remain with? Various presents. When it comes Purim, the parents get their happiness from how the children look...

Anyone who lives a more internal kind of life is actually pained from the Purim that we see today. The Purim we see in our times is devoid of inner happiness, and it has become a day of superficial entertainment. It is painful to watch it take place, for anyone who lives a more internal kind of life.

What do people do to attain more *simcha* in Adar? Are people trying to make their homes happier during Adar? If not, how can we call this a true Jewish home? If a wife wonders how there is more *simcha* in Adar, and she asks her husband, what should he answer? Ask yourself this question: What should you answer your wife when she asks you this question? One should know what to answer her just as much as when she asks him what the *halacha* is about something in the kitchen.

How can it be that so many people do not know how to practically carry out the words of Chazal, who said that there is more *simcha* in Adar? What is the difference between how a Chareidi Jew acts on Purim with how a secular person acts? Because we send *matanos l'evyonim* and we eat a *seudah*? Can we tell a difference? Sadly, there isn't that much of a difference we can recognize, in today's times.

People are asking about how they can make their children feel the happiness of Purim, while the parents themselves don't know how to get to the real, inner happiness of Purim. It is because we are usually used to living superficially.

Outline of The Solution

Now we will focus on a positive point.

If a person wants to live a true kind of life, he needs to know how to infuse spirituality and the meaning of Judaism into the home. One firsts need to uncover depth to matters of Judaism within himself - and then he can then impart that knowledge to your children.

“Saying” A D’var Torah Vs. Living It

For example, what kind of *Dvar Torah* should you say to your children on Purim? Will you say a piece from sefer *Manos HaLevi*...? Say something to them that you relate to deeply in yourself, something profound which you connect with. That is what you should convey to them. Give over to your family a deep understanding of something that you have reached within yourself.

Here is an example. Last week was *Parashas Yisro*, which talks about the giving of the Torah. What kind of *Dvar Torah* should one say to his family? To say over a question about what the order of the Ten Commandments was, and just say an answer? Question, answer?

It's more important to give over the essence of the *parsha*. You can instead say to them, "How did standing at Har Sinai look like? How did everyone prepare? How did they feel?"

I asked this question to my children. My youngest child said: "They went to get new, white clothing." An older child said, "They went to the *mikveh*." My oldest child, who is already a *bar daas*, said, "They did earnest *teshuvah*."

That is a real *Dvar Torah*: to give over a life of Torah. Surely every *Dvar Torah* you say is true and makes sense, but what is the kind of *Dvar Torah* that you really should you say to your children? The child often reads off the *Divrei Torah* from his papers he comes home with, like a *baal korei*. Is this the Torah that is alive, or is it just nice ideas? Is it just about 'saying a *Dvar Torah* at the Shabbos table'? A *Dvar Torah* we say at the Shabbos table has to be alive!

Here is another example. You can simply ask questions that train your children to think. This week is *Parashas Mishpatim*, which speaks about the laws of slavery. If a man owes money and he has no money and no items to sell, he may sell his daughter up until a certain age, in order to pay back a loan. Here is what you can ask your children: "If such a thing would happen to you, what would be the first thing you would sell?"

A *Dvar Torah* must not be about just saying nice "ideas". People are often used to saying a *Dvar Torah* for the sake of just saying "nice ideas". But when you say a *Dvar Torah*, it needs to be something you live by and which others can live by. Similarly, the words of *sefer Derech Hashem* and the *Maharal* are not "ideas." Their words are concepts to live by, in the practical sense - at least for those who care about their souls and don't live just with their body.

Depth Vs. Simplicity

However, another point to mention here is that one cannot either say deep ideas to his wife and children. You can't even tell her the main lessons you understood from a *shiur*; it cannot be understood. Instead, you have to take the words of what you heard and just say something that can be experienced by another. Take a simple question that makes people think about life in a practical way.

For example, Haman decreed genocide on the generation. Ask your family: "What would you do if you were there? How would you react?"

Hopefully the answer will be "*Teshuvah*." But there are different understandings to *teshuvah*. The wife will have her own understanding, and each of the children will have their own understanding.

That is how Judaism must be given over to your family! **First** make sure you understand something you are saying and you relate to it deeply and in a real way. **Then**, explain it to your wife in a way she will understand. **Then**, think of how you will explain it to your children.

Without doing this, the home will not gain *ruchniyus*. It will be filled with nice ideas, but it won't actually affect the family members.

Here is a simple question to ask your family this week: "How do we have more *simcha* during Adar?" There are all kinds of answers. Each person has his own way of how to increase *simcha*. If we take a twelve-year old kid today and we ask him this question, does his answer come close to the words of Chazal at all...? A more mature child will answer that it means to have more *ruchniyus*, but he still won't know what that means, because he only knows about this intellectually - he doesn't act upon that knowledge.

These are practical words for anyone who wants to live differently than the superficial life today. One who wants to live in a true way needs to feel how real the words of Torah and Chazal are, and that the words of Torah and Chazal build our life.

We see that everyone else around us does not live this way. But in our home, we can have a different kind of life than the way life is on the outside world.

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