

- ▶ *The Chasam Sofer's teaching that the main aspect of giving is the joy in the giving*
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- ▶ *The same applies to prayer—the enthusiasm and joy in prayer*
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The month of Adar

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Moshe could not comprehend on his own, along with sanctifying the new moon and the half-shekel, where Hashem showed him a coin of fire. With the Menorah too, Moshe needed to see a Menorah of fire to understand how to make it. However, in the end, he took the ingot of gold, threw it into the fire, and the Menorah was made on its own....

The *Sefas Emes* provides a wondrous explanation for this, saying that from here we see the requirement of making an effort—that when a person does something, it needs to be **with true heart and soul**. When a person does everything he can, **"the rest, which he is unable to do, will be completed"**—i.e., Hashem will help him with what he cannot accomplish on his own. **"And that is the intent behind, 'Throw it into the fire...'"**

To teach a person that he has an obligation to make an effort.

From this, we learn a life-lesson that applies in many areas. This is similar to what the *Midrash* says regarding the *"kerashim"* ("planks" of the Mishkan)—that no

one was able to lift them. Hashem told Moshe to raise them, and Moshe replied that it was impossible. Hashem said to him, **"Nevertheless, put in effort, and I will do it with you."** In the end, the planks rose by themselves — **"the Mishkan was erected"** (Shemos 40:17)—but it nevertheless **appeared** as if Moshe lifted them because they rose simultaneously with his effort to lift them. The *Sefas Emes* writes that **this applies to all the mitzvos**, for a person cannot fulfill Hashem's will perfectly. Rather, everything depends on the effort a person invests, for Hashem's will is in the toil of man.

When a person puts in effort, he merits far more than his effort achieves.

The *Sefas Emes* cites his grandfather, the *Chidushei Ha'Rim*, on our Sages teaching, *"Yagati umatzasi taamin"* ([If a person tells you] "I toiled and I found," believe it"). *"Yagati"* ("toil") implies **hard work and effort**, while *"matzasi"* ("I found") is from the word *"metziah"* ("a find"). A find is not something that comes

from toil but something that is there of its own. The *Chidushei Ha'Rim* explains that a person exerts himself, putting in his effort, and then Hashem grants him the ability to 'find'—to come upon new insights and understanding. Hashem gives you the "find" as a gift in the merit of your exertion.

This is truly a life lesson. All that is expected of us is to do the best we can. In this, it makes no difference whether we are young in years, or older students, or even fully grown adults. **All we need to do is our utmost**—as the Sefas Emes says: "with heart and soul in truth."

With all your soul and all your might

Perhaps this is what we mean when we say, "**And you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might**"—i.e., we love Hashem, and we strive to the best of our ability to do mitzvos and learn Torah with love of Hashem, and we invest all our energy in this, **and then we receive Heavenly assistance.**

The Menorah - A Creation Combined of Heaven's Work and Man's Work

It occurred to me why specifically with the Menorah, Moshe struggled to understand its construction—to the point that Hashem had to show him how to build it, and even then, he was ultimately unable to craft it himself. Moshe invested all his energy in trying to create it, but in the end, he had to throw the gold into the fire, and the Menorah was formed on its own. The reason for this is that the Menorah's function is a partnership—a fusion of human action and heavenly action. Its lamps are kindled by human effort, but it is also a testimony to the Shechinah's presence in that its western lamp burns perpetually—an open and revealed miracle for all to see.

The Menorah service uniquely involved both human and Divine actions.

Regarding the lighting of the lamps, the verse states: "**Outside the curtain of the Testimony, he shall arrange it,**" and our Sages said (*Shabbos* 22b) that "the western lamp ... from it they kindled the lamps [of the Menorah]," and it never extinguished. This was an

open miracle. Hashem desired this to serve as a testimony: "It is a testimony to the inhabitants of the world that the Divine Presence dwells among Israel"—at all times, continually.

Since the Kohen prepares the Menorah and kindles the other lamps from the western lamp—an act of man—while the western lamp itself remains perpetually lit by Divine will—an act of Heaven—it follows that also the crafting of the Menorah involves the work of Heaven. It is a partnership between Heaven and the Jewish people. The Divine Presence shines forth through an open miracle, visible to all in the Mishkan and Beis Hamikdash. The Menorah could not be solely a human creation—it had to be, in part, the work of Hashem, for it was a vessel of Hashem. Yet, it also had to be crafted by man.

In the kindling of the Menorah as well, there is a fusion of the work of Heaven and the work of man.

When Aharon Hakohen and the other kohanim lit the lamps, they lit them from the western lamp, which miraculously never went out. Thus, in that very moment, Hashem

Himself was also a partner in the lighting. For this reason, the Menorah had to be both an act of man and an act of Heaven, forming the foundation for the perpetual open miracle. Therefore, its final design had to come about through a miracle—only Hashem could give it its ultimate form.

The main aspect of the giving is the generosity and joy in the giving

Regarding the fiery coin of the half-shekel, since we touched on it, let us say something about it. Let us bring here the wonderful words of the Chasam Sofer (*Toras Moshe* on "They shall take for Me a portion"), about what troubled Moshe regarding the half-shekel—that everyone was required to bring exactly half a shekel, no less and no more, so that all would be equal. What was the reason that the wealthy person whom Hashem blessed with great wealth could not add more, when we find in many places in the Talmud that a person can go beyond the letter of the law and should, in fact, be careful to do so?

The Chasam Sofer offers an extraordinary and beautiful explanation: Hashem's intent in showing Moshe a coin of fire and saying, "This shall they give" was to teach that "the generosity and intention—

the joy and love for Hashem that burns within the person—is the main aspect of the giving. Regarding the actual coin that is given, everyone is equal in giving a half-shekel. But the main aspect of the giving is the intention in the heart—the fire in the heart, the joy in the heart, and the love of Hashem—"You shall love Hashem your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." I would add: The way you give your half-shekel—the love for Hashem and the joy with which you give—this is where no two people are alike, and there are no limits to it.

A coin of fire – the main thing is the fire and passion in the giving

This is the "coin of fire." While the physical coin is uniform for everyone, the intention can vary for each person according to the fire burning in his heart. This is the half-shekel that Hashem showed Moshe as a coin of fire. This is the fire burning in each person's heart.

Although the prayer text is identical for everyone, the main thing is the intention and passion one prays with

It seems to me that we can extend this concept to prayer as well. We all possess

the "form of the coin"—the fixed text of prayer established by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah (Men of the Great Assembly), and it is the same for everyone. However, each of us, according to the thoughts in our hearts, can interpret and elevate these words into a gift of love and joy toward Hashem, so that our prayer is given to Hashem with all our strength, all our heart, and all the fire within us.

In this, no one is equal to another, for one person's intention is not the same as another's. Thus, even though we all use the same text of prayer—the "half-shekel" of prayer, so to speak, established by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah—that is, we all bring the same "coin of prayer" to redeem our needs and requests—nevertheless, each person comes with his own unique intention and passion.

We may add a homiletic insight: The verse states, "And this is the offering that you shall take from them" (Shemos 25:3). Hashem asks us to give Him "terumah"—to return to Him a part of what He has given us. And even though we no longer have the Mishkan or Beis Hamikdash in which to bring our "korbanos" ("sacrificial offerings"), our study halls

and prayers serve as a **"miniature sanctuary"** (*Mikdash Me'at*), with our prayers embodying our Divine service. **Through this service, we can bring korbanos.** For by reciting the passages concerning the korbanos, and through prayer, we now fulfill the service of korbanos. **Our prayers are the half-shekel and the service today. Therefore, we must recite the parashiyos of korbanos with all our heart, like a righteous person who loves Hashem—"with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might"** (Devarim 6:5).



The month of Adar

The dynamic of Adar – expressing gratitude for both known and unknown miracles.

We are now close to Rosh Chodesh Adar. **"When Adar enters, we increase in joy."** Adar is the month of miracles – not open miracles but hidden miracles. On Purim, we emphasize this by adding in our prayers: **"For the miracles, for the wonders, and for the salvations."** Yet, every day in our prayers, we also acknowledge this reality by saying: **"For Your miracles that are with us every day."** For there are miracles every day.

Just as we nullify chametz before Pesach – both the chametz we know of and the chametz that is unknown to us – so do we declare three times a day in our prayers that miracles and wonders happen at all times. Though we may not always perceive them, we know they exist.

This is our intention in the concluding words of the "Asher Yatzar" blessing: **"Who heals all flesh and acts wondrously."** This corresponds to the earlier words of the blessing, where we say, **"It is revealed and known before Your throne of glory"** specifically – meaning *we* are not aware of the miracles and wonders, but they are **revealed and known before Your throne of glory.** That is, Hashem alone is aware of them. And that is why we make this blessing even without perceiving the miracles – because we believe! **We know** they are happening – that Hashem is saving us and performing miracles for us, whether we see them or not.

In the miracle of the Megillah, all the individual miracles united into one great miracle.

When reflecting on the Megillah and seeing all the different parts and

connecting them together; when seeing how each thing happened separately, on its own, and connecting everything, it becomes clear to all that this was no coincidence. It is almost impossible to claim that this was not an open miracle. It's almost impossible to say this wasn't a revealed miracle. For us, this is an obvious miracle. **R' Yaakov Emden** says that the fact that the Jewish people still exist is the greatest miracle of all.

"When Adar enters, we increase in joy." This is the month of joy. The zodiac sign of Adar is a fish – **"The evil eye has no power over fish."** As such, the month of Adar embodies the "good eye," by which we see how the Jewish people are blessed with an abundance of good tidings.

Regarding the joy of Adar and joy in general

"Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Shilas, said in the name of Rav: Just as when Av enters, we decrease in joy, in like manner, when Adar enters, we increase in joy" (*Taanis* 29a).

We may derive some insight by noting that it does not say, "When Adar enters, one must be happy" or "one is obligated to rejoice," **but rather, "we increase in joy."** Even more illuminating is that regarding the month of

Av, it says, "**we decrease in joy**" and not, "we increase in mourning" or, "we are forbidden from joy." This all implies that **we should always be in a state of joy**, but sometimes in a greater state of joy, such as in the month of Adar, when we increase in joy, and sometimes in a lesser state of joy, such as in the month of Av. However, there should always be a basic level of joy, reflecting the light of the soul that shines within us and our constant attachment to Hashem, at all times and in all situations.

To quote the Rambam in Hilchos De'os 1:4: "One should not be frivolous and laughing exceedingly, nor sad and mournful, **but rather joyful all his days in a relaxed manner, with a pleasant countenance.** The same applies to the rest of his character traits [—they should be on the balanced path]. This is the path of the wise...." From here we see that being constantly joyful is the balanced and continuous path for every Jew. When I presented this idea before **my esteemed teacher, the illustrious gaon, R' David Cohen shlita**, rabbi of the *kehillah* of Gevul Yaavetz, he praised them and said with a smile on his face: "**Bratzlov!**" (I think he meant that my words reflected the view of the holy R' Nachman of

Breslov [Bratzlav].) See what I wrote above regarding Tu Bishvat—that just as a tree always retains its central trunk, which only expands and never ceases, so too, a person never loses their "inner child" and youthful joy—and this is one's inner, continuous joy. **Understand this.**

The joy of Adar I vs. the joy of Adar II

In a leap year, we have two Adars—Adar I and Adar II. Which one is greater in joy?

As a psychologist, my first inclination is to say that Adar II is greater in joy. In Adar II, we have all the halachos of the days of Purim. These halachos include a fast, commemorating both the three-day fast that Esther established in that generation and the great battle on the 13th of Adar, as well as the reading of the Megillah, which is filled with tension, beginning with Haman's rise and the decrees against us. This is similar to a person born into a wealthy family—since they are accustomed to wealth, it holds little significance for them. But someone born into a poor family, who later succeeded in business and became very wealthy, will experience much greater joy due to the transformation, the shift

from poverty to wealth resulting from his efforts.

We can explain this by looking at the Pesach Haggadah. It is filled with **contrasts. The four questions of the "Mah Nishtanah" essentially express a single idea—the child is pointing out contradictions**, such as the fact that on the one hand we incorporate symbols of slavery and poverty in the Pesach *seder*, while on the other hand we include symbols of wealth and royalty in the *seder*. So are we rich or poor? And then we answer, "*Avodim hayinu lePharaoh... vayotzieinu Hashem misham*" ("We were slaves to Pharaoh... and Hashem took us out from there.") We make the contrast because the feeling of how fortunate we are is always greater when one sees the contrast. **From this perspective**, then, Adar II is greater in joy than Adar I, because it highlights the contrast.

But perhaps Adar I is greater in joy because it gives us a month of tranquility, free of painful memories. But then I realized—**Adar I is greater!** Why?

"But in every generation, they rise against us to destroy us, and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand." The power of Adar is that

Hashem saves us through a hidden miracle. There are hidden miracles that can only be seen through faith in Hashem's providence, and there are hidden miracles so concealed that even those who believe in Hashem and His providence over the Jewish people cannot perceive them—they will only be revealed in the future.

In Adar I, we observe **Purim Katan** without any Megillah-reading and without any halachos commemorating the miracle. It seems to me that the special power of Purim Katan is that **even when we do not know what the nations are plotting against us, Hashem is constantly saving us**. This is a hidden miracle in the full sense of the term—so hidden that even we, the Jewish people, His intimate nation, cannot presently see it. We still do not know what it is that the Master of the World has saved us from. "But in every generation" – in every generation, in every year, at every moment, He is saving us.

We say in the blessing "*Asher Yatzar es ha'adam be'chochmah*" ("Who formed man with wisdom"), regarding our bodies: "*Galuy v'yadu'a lifnei kisei kvodecha she'im yipase'ach echad meihem o yisaseim echad meihem...*"

("It is revealed and known before the throne of Your glory that if one of them were to be opened or one of them were to be sealed..."). We are saying, "Hashem, You are aware of all the things that could go wrong in our bodies, if Heaven forbid, an artery were to be blocked, or we were to suffer a heart attack or a stroke. There are so many things that could go wrong—things that are **revealed and known before Your throne of glory, revealed before You, but not before us**."

In "Hallel," we say: "*Hallelu es Hashem kol goyim, shabechu hu kol ha'umim, ki gavar aleinu chasdo, ve'emes Hashem le'olam, Hallelukah!*" ("Praise Hashem, **all nations**; exalt Him, **all peoples**. For **His kindness was mighty over us**, and the truth of Hashem is forever—Hallelukah!"). I once heard the following explanation of this: Why do the nations laud Hashem and sing His praises? Because they plotted against the Jewish people, and their plans failed. They are the ones who are fully aware that their schemes have been thwarted. Even though they are frustrated that their plans have been ruined, they still acknowledge and appreciate Hashem who foiled their designs.

This is an unbelievable realization! Even those very nations who "*stand against us to destroy us*" – when they fail, they recognize that there is a Master of the World. And then they sing "Hallel." **And we must learn about Hashem's hidden kindnesses from their singing of his praises!**

We can also look at this from another perspective, in terms of "levels." There is Adar I, in which one is filled with joy, and then there is Adar II, which stands atop Adar I, allowing one to reach even higher levels of joy. The fact that Adar II comes only after Adar I reflects the idea of "*marbin b'simcha*" ("**increasing in joy**"). The joy just grows and grows. And so, instead of just thirty days of joy, we now have double. And with that, we can say that in Adar I, we experience greater joy than in Adar I, since these are additional days of **continuous joy**.

Until now, we have spoken from a conceptual perspective, but the truth is that it's a deep and complex halachic topic. See *Megillah* 6b, Tosafos, s.v. *V'R' Elazar B'R' Yosi Savar...*, which discusses two opinions regarding the mitzvah of the festive meal on the 14th and 15th of Adar I (Purim Katan). See also the *Chidushei Hasfas*

Emes there, and whether the year in which the miracle occurred was a leap year with two Adars, because if it was, the simple implication is that the miracle happened in Adar II! See *Yerushalmi, Megillah* 1:5 and *Responsa of Chasam Sofer, Orach Chaim, Siman* 163, where he writes about this matter. See also *Chasam Sofer al Hatorah on Parashas Tetzaveh*, where he writes that one should send

"*mishloach manos*" on Purim Katan as well! Delving into this topic is the true joy of Adar, as it is written: "*Pikudei Hashem yesharim, mesamchei leo*" ("*The precepts of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart*") (Tehillim 19:9).

Let us hope that in this Adar, the "*mi'shenichnas Adar marbin b'simcha*" ("when Adar enters, we increase in joy") will be

fulfilled with the same dynamic as the zodiacal sign of the month of Adar—the fish. Fish are hidden from the eye. Similarly, may the "*ayin hara*" ("evil eye") have no power over us. May we merit to enjoy our families and have truly wonderful joy this month, especially this upcoming *Purim*, b'ezras Hashem, very, very soon!

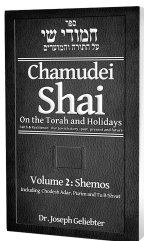
ב-י-ל-א ואמן MaharaI Tzintz

PEARLS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE GAON FROM PLOTZK

"וַיִּקְחֵי לִי תְרוּמָה",

"And have them take for Me an offering" (Shemos 25:2).

The MaharaI Tzintz says that the word "לי" ("for Me") alludes to the dimensions of the Mishkan, which was 30 (lamed = 30) cubits long and 10 (yud = 10) cubits high. "According to all that I show you, the pattern of the Mishkan and the pattern of all its vessels." He explains that through Moshe's power to behold and contemplate the heavenly, spiritual pattern of the Mishkan and its vessels, he drew holiness into the physical Mishkan and its vessels on earth. The verse continues: "...and so shall you do," which our Sages interpreted as "you shall do for generations." The MaharaI Tzintz says that through the power of Moshe's contemplation of the Heavenly Mishkan, all future generations received the power to build a Holy Temple in which holiness would dwell, and the Divine Presence would reside among us, may it be speedily in our days, Amen.



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