

## "מיחייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא"

# Our Task on Purim Is to Extract the Simchah from the Other Domain and Return It to the Domain of Kedushah—to Rejoice the Simchah of Mitzvah

In honor of the upcoming festival of Purim, it is fitting that we examine a teaching from our blessed sages (Shabbas 88a). They teach us that as a result of the miracle of Purim, Yisrael accepted the Torah out of "ahavah"—with love. This was not the case at Matan Torah, when the mountain was held above their heads imposingly, coercing them to accept the Torah. We find the following elucidation regarding the passuk in the Megillah (Esther 9, 27): "קיימו וקיבלו היהודים, קיימו מה שקיבלו כבר"—**"The Jews fulfilled and accepted"—they fulfilled that which they had already accepted.** We must endeavor to explain why they fulfilled and accepted the Torah with "ahavah" specifically at the time of the Purim miracle and not at the time of Matan Torah.

Additionally, it is worthwhile exploring a curiosity we find specifically related to the simchah of Purim, which we do not find anywhere else. We have learned in the Gemara (Megillah 7b): "אמר רבא מיחייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא, עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך—מרדכי"—**Rava said: One is obligated to drink wine on Purim until he cannot differentiate between "cursed is Haman" and "blessed is Mordechai."** We must endeavor to understand the deeper significance of this obligation to drink enough wine that we can no longer distinguish between "arur Haman" and "baruch Mordechai."

### Where Is There a Reference to Haman in the Torah

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing a statement from the Gemara (Chullin 139b): "המן מן התורה מנין, —המן העץ—**where is there a reference to Haman in the Torah? From the words "המן העץ"** ("from the tree"). In other words, the name Haman is alluded to in HKB"H's statement to Adam HaRishon regarding the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as" (Bereishis 3, 11): "המן העץ אשר צייתך לבלתי אכול מומו אכלת"—**have you eaten of the**

**tree from which I commanded you not to eat?** The word המן is spelled exactly the same as the name המן. The Bnei Yissaschar (Adar 7, 9) explains the significance of this fact based on what is written in Mishnas Chassidim (Maseches Adar 3, 5-6) in the name of the Arizal. He explains that the wicked Haman is the embodiment of the "nachash hakadmoni," who convinced Adam and Chava and all of the souls incorporated in their beings to partake of the forbidden Eitz HaDa'as. In similar fashion, he persuaded Yisrael, at the time of the Purim saga, to partake of the feast hosted by the wicked Achashveirosh. This then is the question posed by the Gemara: "המן מן התורה מנין"—from where did Haman draw the power to prosecute and oppose the Jews? To which it answers: "המן העץ"—he awakened the sin of the Eitz HaDa'as by convincing them to participate in and delight in the feast held by that wicked king.

In this manner, we can also explain why HKB"H orchestrated that Mordechai the tzaddik, specifically, would be the instrument of Haman's downfall. For, we find in the Yalkut Reuveini (Bereishis 505): "מרדכי והמן היו גלגול אדם נחש"—**Mordechai and Haman were reincarnations of Adam and the "nachash."** For this precise reason, HKB"H arranged for the downfall of Haman—the "nachash hakadmoni"—to occur at the hands of Mordechai—the gilgul and tikun of Adam HaRishon.

With this in mind, we can understand what Rabbi Yonatan Eibschitz writes in Yearos Dvash (2, 9). He explains that Haman and his advisors planned to erect a tree standing fifty-amos high in order to evoke the memory of the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as." By doing so, they were certain that they would succeed in hanging Mordechai on said tree. So, this is how he interprets the Gemara's question cited above: "המן מן התורה מנין"—from where did he seek the power to hang Mordechai on the tree? "המן העץ"—by evoking the taint of the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as." In fact, we might add that

their scheme relied on the knowledge that Mordechai was a gilgul of Adam HaRishon, the guilty party in the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as."

So, it now behooves us to delve into the story depicted by the Megillah in order to gain a better understanding of the epic battle waged by Haman HaAggagi—the embodiment of the "nachash hakadmoni"—and all of his followers descending from Amalek—against Yisrael. As explained, he planned to evoke the guilt associated with the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as." How indeed did Mordechai the tzaddik—the gilgul of Adam HaRishon—succeed in defeating Haman and actually turning the tables on him? For, as we know, Haman and his sons were ultimately hung on the tree that they prepared for Mordechai.

### The Simchah Emanating from the Domain of Kedushah as Opposed to the Simchah Emanating from the Other Domain

I would like to propose a wonderful explanation. Upon scrutinizing the events depicted in Megillas Esther, we find a central theme throughout. There is an epic struggle between the simchah of shameless depravity espoused by Haman and Achashveirosh—the agents of the "other domain"—versus the simchah associated with Torah and mitzvos—espoused by Mordechai and Esther. Both sides struggle to exert their influence over the Jewish populace. The Megillah opens with a description of the extravagant, excessive simchah, characterized by immorality and drunkenness, hosted by King Achashveirosh (Esther 1, 3): "בשנת שלוש למלכו עשה משתה לכל שריו ועבדיו חיל פרס ומדי: הברתמים ושרי המדינות לפניו, בהראותו את עושר כבוד מלכותו ואת יקר תפארתו—**in the third year of his reign, he made a feast for all his officials and his servants, the army of Persia and Media, the nobles and officials of the provinces being present. He displayed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor of his splendid majesty for many days--one hundred and eighty days.**

As the story unfolds, we see how Haman HaAggagi, the oppressor and nemesis of the Jews, attempts to suppress the Jews' simchah by lobbying Achashveirosh to issue a decree ordering the extermination of all the Jews. When his efforts succeed, we are informed (ibid. 3, 15): "והמלך והמן ישבו לשתות והעיר שושן נבוכה"—**the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was bewildered.** On the one hand, the forces of tumah sit down to celebrate and get drunk: "והמלך והמן ישבו לשתות". On the other hand, distress and gloom prevail in the realm of kedushah: "והעיר שושן נבוכה". This pattern is replicated throughout the provinces

ruled by Achashveirosh (ibid. 4, 3): "ובכל מדינה ומדינה מקום אשר דבר—**and in every province, any place the king's command and his decree extended, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting and weeping and lament; sackcloth and ashes were spread out for the masses.**

However, after Mordechai successfully brings salvation to Yisrael, the picture turns around completely. The atmosphere surrounding Haman and his cohorts becomes one of grief and sorrow, as it is written (ibid. 7, 9): "הדבר יצא מפי המלך ופני המן—**as soon as the king's utterance emerged, Haman's face became covered with shame.** In stark contrast, simchah prevailed in the domain of kedushah, as it is written (8, 16): "והעיר שושן צהלה ושמחה. ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר"—**then the city of Shushan was cheerful and glad; the Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor.** This simchah is also expressed by means of Chazal's institution to drink wine on Purim, as it is written (ibid. 9, 22): "לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה"—**to observe them as days of feasting and gladness.**

Upon further consideration, it is apparent that this epic struggle between the domain of kedushah and the domain of tumah related to the expression of simchah takes places throughout the year—not only on Purim. From the perspective of kedushah, we are commanded to serve Hashem with the simchah of mitzvah, as it states (Tehillim 100, 2): "עבדו את ה' בשמחה בואו לפניו ברננה"—**serve Hashem with simchah; come before Him with joyous song.** Furthermore, studying Torah and performing mitzvos result in simchah, as it states (ibid. 19, 9): "פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב"—**the mandates of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart.**

In contrast, the yetzer hara and the forces of tumah attempt all sorts of ploys to introduce sadness and lethargy into one's service of Hashem. They attempt to convince him that service of Hashem is extremely difficult. Thus, they persuade him to replace the service of Hashem with forms of licentious simchah. They portray the pleasures of Olam HaZeh in the most brilliant of colors, convincing a person that this is the way to achieve true simchah.

In truth, their claims are untrue. The simchah associated with the delights of Olam HaZeh are short-lived. At the beginning, there is simchah, but at the end, there is sorrow and heartache. In the words of the wisest of all men (Koheles 2, 2): "לשחוק"—**I said of laughter, 'It is mad!' and of joy, 'what does it accomplish!'** Rashi comments: "I said of laughter, 'It is mad!'—it is mixed with tears and groans. "And of joy, 'what does it accomplish!'—after all,

**it culminates with sorrow.** This indeed is what we find in the "tochachos" of parshat Ki Savo; the punishments are visited upon Yisrael, chas v'shalom (Devarim 28, 47): תחת אשר לא עבדת "because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, with joy and with goodness of heart, out of an abundance of everything.

### Without the Yetzer HaRa We Would Not Have the Simchah of Torah

After much consideration, I would like to explain in greater depth the struggle between the wicked Haman and the righteous Mordechai—the simchah of debauchery versus the simchah of kedushah. Let us refer to a statement in the Zohar hakadosh (Toldos 138a): "אצטריך יצר הרע לעולם כמטרא לעולם, דאלמלא יצר הרע "the world needs the yetzer hara like the world needs rain; for without the yetzer hara, the joy of learning Torah would be absent. Thus, we learn an amazing chiddush: Without the yetzer hara, it is impossible to rejoice in the simchah of Torah.

Applying this concept, the Ben Ish Chai, in his sefer Ben Yehoyada (Kiddushin 30b), explains the implication of the Gemara's statement (ibid.): "תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל, אם פגע בך מנוול זה -- משכחו לבית המדרש" **a Baraita of the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael taught the following: If this despicable character engages you, draw him into the Beit Midrash.** Here are his sacred words:

"אם פגע בך מנוול זה להחטיאך בחמדה וקנאה ותאוה גשמית, אל תדחה ותשליכהו לגמרי, אלא משוך אותו לבית המדרש להשתמש בו בדבר טוב, ששם יהיה לך קנאה מלומדי תורה, וחמדה ותאוה להסביר סברה ולעשות חידושי תורה, ויהיה לו מכוחו חדותא דשמעתא, כי כאשר דבר סתום ומוקשה שלא יכלו לפתרו ולפרשו כל חכמי המדרש, ואתה זכית לפרשו ולפתרו כמה שמחה יגיע לך מזה."

**If this despicable character engages you in an attempt to cause you to sin by means of coveting, envy or physical desire, do not dismiss him and thrust him aside completely. Rather, draw him into the Beit Midrash to use him for a good purpose. For, there you will have envy of those studying Torah, and the voracity and desire to provide a good explanation and to suggest novel interpretations of the Torah. From his strengths, you will achieve the simchah of Torah. For, when something is obscure and difficult and none of the scholars in the study-hall were able to solve it or explain it, and you did succeed in doing so, your simchah will be immeasurable.**

Notwithstanding, this is somewhat perplexing. It is hard to imagine that it is impossible to achieve the simchah of Torah without the presence of the yetzer hara. After all, the source of

simchah is HKB"H—the source of kedushah. For, it is written (Divrei HaYamim I 16, 27): "הוד והדר לפניו עוז וחדוה במקומו" **Glory and Majesty are before Him, might and delight are in His place!** Elsewhere it states (Tehillim 104, 31): "יהי כבוד ה' לעולם: "the glory of Hashem will endure forever; Hashem will rejoice in his works. Thus, we have explicit sources indicating that simchah emanates from HKB"H. So, why should we achieve simchah through the yetzer hara when we can achieve simchah through HKB"H?

### Through the Cheit Eitz HaDa'as the Yetzer HaRa Stole the Element of Simchah from the Realm of Kedushah

It appears that we can reconcile this difficulty in a reasonable fashion by referring to the sacred words of the Shem MiShmuel (Succos 5678), which rely on the teachings of his father, the esteemed author of the Avnei Nezer, zy"a:

"ובסגנון זה יש לומר בענין שמחה שהיא דבר עליון, כמו שכתוב עוז וחדוה במקומו... וכמו שהגיד כ"ק אבי אדמו"ר זצלה"ה שהסטרא אחרא הוא יללה, כשמה של זאת הרשעה [לילית] על שם שמיללת, עד כאן דבריו. ואפילו שמחה של הוללות אין לה מצד עצמה, אלא גזל ועושק הוא אתם מן הקדושה."

He states quite clearly that the source of simchah is the realm of kedushah. However, the powers of the "other side" stole it from the realm of kedushah. This then is the implication of the statement from the Zohar hakadosh cited above: "דאלמלא יצר הרע חדותא דשמעתא -- לא יהיו" **for without the yetzer hara, the joy of learning Torah would be absent.** It comes to teach us that we are obligated to extract the simchah from the yetzer hara. Thus, we will return the stolen article of value to the realm of kedushah by using the element of simchah to rejoice in the study of Torah, in keeping with the dictum above: "אם פגע בך מנוול זה משכחו לבית המדרש".

Now, it behooves us to explain when exactly the "other side" stole the element of simchah from the realm of kedushah. Let us refer to what we have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 40a): "תניא אילן שאכל ממנו אדם הראשון, רבי מאיר אומר גפן היה, שאין לך דבר שמביא יללה על האדם אלא יין, שנאמר (בראשית ט-כא) וישת מן היין וישכר." **it was taught in a Baraita: Concerning the type of tree from which Adam HaRishon ate, Rabbi Meir says: It was a grapevine; for there is nothing that brings wailing upon a person as wine does, as it is stated: "And he (Noach) drank from the wine and he became drunk."** Similarly, the Midrash teaches us (B.R. 19, 5) regarding the passuk (Bereishis 3, 6): "אמר רבי: "ותקח מפריו ותאכל, אמר רבי: "She took from its fruit and she ate." **Rabbi Eivo said: She squeezed grapes and gave it to him.**

Regarding this matter, we find an incredible chiddush in the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh (Bereishis 1, 29): **אמר ז"ל שאם היה ממתין עד: ערב שבת, היה מקדש על היין—those of blessed memory said: Had he waited until Erev Shabbas, he would have made kiddush over the wine.** It appears that the source for this notion comes from the Siftei Kohen (Bereishis), one of the young disciples of the Arizal. He deduces from the language employed by the Midrash that had Adam HaRishon merely abstained until Shabbas Kodesh, he would have been allowed to partake of the fruit of the vine by fulfilling the mitzvah of making kiddush over the wine.

He adds a wonderful allusion, which he uses to explain the following statement of Rava's in the Gemara (B.B. 97b): **סוחט אדם—אדם אשכול של ענבים ואומר עליו קידוש היום—a person ("Adam") may squeeze the juice from a cluster of grapes (before Shabbas) and recite the kiddush of the day over it.** Rava specifically said: **"סוחט אדם"**—alluding to the fact that we are obliged to make amends for the sin of **"Adam"** HaRishon, who drank wine that was prohibited, from the grapes that Chava had squeezed for him. To rectify his transgression: **"A person may squeeze the juice from a cluster of grapes (before Shabbas) and recite the kiddush of the day over it."**

**"The mandates of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart" versus "And wine will gladden the heart of man"**

Like a loyal servant in the presence of his masters, I would like to elaborate on their idea. HKB"H prohibited Adam HaRishon to drink wine on the weekday. Had he abstained and waited until Shabbas, he would have been able to fulfill the mitzvah of making kiddush over the wine. Where is there an allusion to this fact in HKB"H's warning to Adam HaRishon not to eat from the Eitz HaDa'as? First, however, let us reconcile a matter that perplexes the commentaries. They wonder why David HaMelech characterizes wine as follows (Tehillim 104, 15): **ויין ישמח לבב—ויין ישמח לבב—and wine will gladden the heart of man.** We must also endeavor to explain why he compares the simchah associated with wine with the simchah associated with studying Torah (ibid. 19, 9): **כי ביום יאכלו ממות תמות— the mandates of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart.**

The matter is reconciled beautifully by the sefer Ateres Paz. He refers to Avraham Avinu's remark to the malachim (Bereishis 18, 5): **"ואקחה פת לחם וסעדו לבכם"—I will fetch a morsel of bread that you may nourish your heart.** Rashi comments in the name of the Midrash: **"The Torah does not employ the word "לבכם" (in the plural) but rather "לבכם" (in the singular); this teaches**

**us that the yetzer hara does not have control over malachim.** We find that the plural form **"לבב"** alludes to both yetzers—the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara. This is also evident from the elucidation in the Mishnah (Berachos 54a) regarding the passuk (Devarim 6, 5): **בשני יצריך ביצר טוב וביצר רע—** a person is commanded to love Hashem with all parts of his heart—referring to both his yetzer tov and his yetzer hara.

This then is the difference between wine and Torah. Regarding Torah, it states: **"פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב"**—the singular term **"לב"** is used, referring to one part of the heart, the yetzer tov that grows and is enhanced with the study of Torah. The yetzer hara, however, is not gladdened by Torah-study; after all, Torah-study is the antidote used to eliminate the yetzer hara. On the other hand, regarding wine, it states: **"ויין ישמח לבב אנוש"**—here, Scriptures specifically uses the plural term **"לבב"**. Because on the one hand, wine is capable of gladdening the yetzer tov, if it is used to make kiddush on Shabbas Kodesh. On the other hand, however, it is also liable to gladden the yetzer hara, chas v'shalom, when it is consumed during the week for the sake of something other than a mitzvah.

This enlightens us with regards to HKB"H's admonishment of Adam HaRishon (Bereishis 2, 17): **כי לא תאכל ממנו, וימעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו, כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות—but of the Eitz HaDa'as Good and Bad, you must not eat; for on the day you eat of it, you will surely die.** As we have learned, the Eitz HaDa'as was a grapevine, whose fruit was squeezed to produce wine. Regarding wine, it states: **"ויין ישמח לבב אנוש"**—referring to the two hearts, the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara. Thus, it turns out that it is analogous to the **"Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa."** For, if it is consumed for the sake of a mitzvah, it is **"טוב"**; for it enhances the yetzer **"tov."** Yet, if it is consumed for a purpose other than a mitzvah, it is **"רע"**; for it enhances the yetzer **"hara."**

This then is the message HKB"H was conveying to Adam HaRishon when instructing him not to eat from the Eitz HaDa'as **"Tov VaRa."** In other words, during the week, when wine has the status of **"good and bad"**--**"טוב ורע"**—do not partake of it. For, there exists a grave, inherent danger that the yetzer hara will be enhanced and will affect you with the simchah of debauchery. As explained, this form of simchah is short-lived and false; it ultimately causes heartache, as conveyed by the passuk: **כי ביום יאכלו ממות תמות-- for on the day you eat of it, you will surely die**—the illusory simchah will end poorly.

Thus, HKB"H was sending Adam HaRishon a very clear message. The prohibition to partake of the Eitz HaDa'as and to drink wine only applies when the Eitz HaDa'as is **"טוב ורע"**. For

then, the following passuk applies: "וַיֵּין יִשְׂמַח לֵב אָנוּשׁ"—it can benefit either heart. However, had he waited until nighttime, until Shabbas Kodesh, to perform the mitzvah of making kiddush over the wine, then the following passuk would have applied (Koheles 8, 5): "שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יִדַּע דְּבַר רַע"—**he who obeys the commandment will know no evil.** In that case, the status of the wine would have been only "טוב" without any admixture of "רע". The mitzvah of making kiddush over the wine would have sanctified the simchah associated with the wine, in keeping with the passuk: "פְּקוּדֵי ה' יִשְׂרִים מִשְׂמַחֵי לֵב".

### In the Process of the Cheit Eitz HaDa'as the Yetzer HaRa Entered Adam and Stole His Simchah of Mitzvah

Accordingly, had Adam HaRishon waited until Shabbas eve to make kiddush on the wine, he would have merited serving Hashem with the simchah associated with the performance of a mitzvah—involving only the one heart associated with the yetzer tov. The "nachash hakadmoni," the yetzer hara and all of its forces, would have remained stranded outside the boundaries of kedushah without any simchah. As forces of tumah, they possess no association with simchah but are associated only with sadness, grief and heartache.

Yet, by following the advice of the nachash and drinking from the wine that Chava prepared for him on the weekday, the words of the passuk were fulfilled: "וַיֵּין יִשְׂמַח לֵב אָנוּשׁ". The yetzer hara entered his heart; so, instead of one heart, he ended up with two hearts—a yetzer tov and a yetzer hara. This accords with Rashi's comment (Bereishis 2, 25): "וַאֲפֵי עַל פִּי שְׁנֵיתָנָהּ בּוֹ דַּעַת לְקִרְוַת שְׁמוֹת, לֹא נָתַן... **even though he was endowed with the knowledge to assign names, the yetzer hara was not placed in him until he ate from the tree; and it entered his being.** So, we learn that the yetzer hara entered man's heart after the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as." That was the effect of the contamination and filth with which the nachash infected man and all of creation.

At the very same time that the nachash—the yetzer hara—succeeded in entering man's heart, it stole the simchah of mitzvah from him. In its place, it introduced a licentious form of simchah that encourages and thrives on wrongdoing, in keeping with the notion of: "וַיֵּין יִשְׂמַח לֵב אָנוּשׁ". As explained, this form of simchah is only fleeting and ultimately leads to grief and heartache, in accordance with the decree that man must die. Ever since then, it has been incumbent upon us to extract the simchah from the yetzer hara by using the attribute of simchah to celebrate and rejoice in the study of Torah.

### Haman the Nachash Advised Achashveirosh to Tattle the Jews through the Simchah of Debauchery

Following this line of reasoning, let us proceed to explain and illustrate the wonders of the divine master plan. Haman, the embodiment of the "nachash hakadmoni," replicated the deed of the nachash by instigating the downfall of the Jews by means of the licentious form of simchah, characterized by wantonness and immorality. Haman persuaded Achashveirosh to invite the Jews in Shushan to a seven-day party, in order to cause them to sin. This is described by the Midrash (Esther Rabbah 7, 13):

"הַמֶּן הִרְשַׁע בְּעֵלְיִלָּה גְדוּלָה בָּא עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל... אָמַר הַמֶּן לְאַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ, אֲלֵקִיָּהֶם שֶׁל אֱלֹהֵי שׁוֹנָא זִימָה, הַעֲמִיד לָהֶם זִוְנוֹת וְעִשָׂה לָהֶם מִשְׁתָּה, וְגִזְזֹר עֲלֵיהֶם שִׁיבֹאוּ כֹּלָם וַיֵּאָכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כְרִצּוֹנָם, שְׁנֵאמַר (אֶסְתֵּר א-ח) לְעִשׂוֹת כְּרִצּוֹן אִישׁ וְאִישׁ. כִּיּוֹן שְׂרָאָה מִרְדֵּכַי כִּךְ עֲמִיד וְהַכְרִיז עֲלֵיהֶם, וְאָמַר לָהֶם לֹא תִלְכוּ לֹאכֹל בְּסַעֲוֹדָתוֹ שֶׁל אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ... וְלֹא שְׁמַעוּ לְדַבְרֵי מִרְדֵּכַי וְהִלְכוּ כֹּלָם לְבֵית הַמִּשְׁתָּה... וְאָכְלוּ וְשִׁתּוּ וְנִשְׁתַּכְּרוּ וְנִתְקַלְקְלוּ, מִיַּד עֲמִיד שֶׁטָּן וְהִלְשִׁין עֲלֵיהֶם לְפָנֵי הַקֶּב"ה... מִיַּד אָמַר הַקֶּב"ה לְשֶׁטָּן הִבָּא לִי מִגִּילָה וְאֶכְתּוֹב עֲלֵיהָ כְּלִיָּהּ."

**The wicked Haman assaulted Yisrael with a tremendous ruse . . . Haman said to Achashveirosh, "The G-d of these people hates immorality. Place prostitutes before them and make them a feast. Decree that they must attend, eat, drink, and do as they please"—as it states: "To do according to each man's pleasure." Upon seeing this, Mordechai took a stand and made a pronouncement. He told them not to go and eat at Achashveirosh's meal . . . They did not heed Mordechai's words; they all went to the festival hall . . . They ate, drank, became inebriated and behaved immorally. Immediately, the Satan stood up and badmouthed them to HKB"H . . . Immediately, HKB"H said to the Satan: "Bring Me a scroll and I will inscribe on it annihilation."**

We see that Haman's deed was exactly the same as that of the "nachash hakadmoni." The malevolent serpent toppled Adam and Chava by exposing them to the simchah of debauchery, by persuading them to drink from the wine of the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa. In the end, it became apparent to everyone that this simchah was false and ultimately resulted in the bitter cry of death, which was imposed upon Adam, Chava and all of creation. This is precisely what transpired with Haman and Achashveirosh, the representatives of the nachash. They toppled Yisrael by exposing them to the licentious simchah that prevailed at Achashveirosh's feast. This bogus simchah concocted by Haman was ultimately transformed into a death decree. For, Achashveirosh subsequently agreed to decree the annihilation of all the Jews: "וְהַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן יֵשְׁבוּ לְשִׁתּוֹת וְהַעִיר שׁוֹשֵׁן נְבוּכָה".

Then, Mordechai, the gilgul of Adam HaRishon came along. He recalled what the "nachash hakadmoni" had done to him in the previous incarnation. Now, the nachash was attempting to repeat its evil deeds in the guise of Haman, a descendant of Amalek. Therefore, he retaliated with all of his powers in an attempt to convince Yisrael to perform teshuvah for their simchah of debauchery—as it is written (Esther 4, 1): **"ומרדכי ידע את כל אשר נעשה: ויקרע מרדכי את בגדיו וילבש שק ואפר ויצא בתוך העיר ויזעק זעקה גדולה ומרה—Mordechai learned of all that had been done; and Mordechai tore his clothes and donned sackcloth and ashes. He went out into the midst of the city, and cried a loud and bitter cry.** Scriptures does not inform us what Mordechai cried out; however, based on the Midrash just cited, we can imagine the content of his intense rebuke directed toward the Jews of Shushan:

**Dear fellow Jews, children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, I admonished you not to participate in Achashveirosh's wine festival. For, licentious simchah results in misery and death. Yet, you could not withstand the temptation of the "nachash hakadmoni" disguised as Haman and Achashveirosh. Consequently, he once again stole the simchah of kedushah from you and brought grief and suffering upon you. Nevertheless, it is still not too late to return to Hashem by means of "teshuvah sheleimah"—regretting and renouncing the past and agreeing to make amends in the future.**

### **Mordechai Returned the Simchah to the Domain of Kedushah so that Yisrael Would Accept the Torah out of Love**

This explains why Esther advised Mordechai (ibid. 16): **"לך כנוס את כל היהודים הנמצאים בשושן וצומו עלי ואל תאכלו ואל תשתו שלשת ימים—go, assemble all the Jews that are to be found in Shushan, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day.** She intended that the suffering associated with the fast would atone for the fact that they derived pleasure and delighted in the simchah of debauchery. By means of this act of teshuvah, Mordechai and Esther successfully turned the tables on their adversaries. They successfully regained possession of the simchah of kedushah that Haman and his advisors had stolen. The start of this turnabout is indicated by the passuk: **"הדבר יצא מפי המלך ובני המן חפרו"**—they hung Haman on the tree. This was the retribution for causing Adam HaRishon and all of creation to sin with the Eitz HaDa'as. As

a result, the simchah associated with the performance of a mitzvah returned to Yisrael, as it states: **"ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר"—the Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor.**

We can now rejoice for we have gained a better appreciation of how Mordechai influenced Yisrael to accept the Torah out of ahavah, in keeping with the elucidation: **"קיימו וקיבלו - קיימו מה שקיבלו כבר"**. First, Mordechai successfully retrieved the simchah of kedushah from the clutches of Haman and Achashveirosh—the agents of the klipah. Then he returned it to the realm of kedushah by helping Yisrael understand that the only genuine simchah—that endures and lasts forever—is the simchah of Torah that stems from "ahavat Hashem."

For this reason, the days of Purim were established as days of **"משתה ושמחה"—feasting and joy.** They represent the tikun for the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as," when they drank wine on a weekday. Now, on Purim, wine is consumed to celebrate the simchah of mitzvah—commemorating that they confirmed and accepted the Torah out of ahavah. They extracted the simchah of mitzvah from the "nachash hakadmoni," who stole it during the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as." They restored it as the simchah celebrating the acceptance of the Torah out of ahavah.

This provides us with a very nice understanding of Rava's profound pronouncement: **"מיחייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא"**—a Jew is obligated to get drunk and rejoice on Purim by drinking wine: **"עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי"**—to the point that one cannot differentiate between the illusory simchah experienced by the reshaim indulging in the delights of Olam HaZeh—characterized as **"ארור המן"**—and the delight and simchah a Jew experiences by studying Torah and serving Hashem—characterized as **"ברוך מרדכי"**.

Let us elaborate. Only when we experience the delight and simchah associated with the service of Hashem to the same degree that the reshaim enjoy the nonsensical whims of Olam HaZeh; that is the telltale sign that we have succeeded in retrieving the simchah that the klipah stole and have returned it to the domain of kedushah. That represents the fulfillment of the passuk: **"ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר"**. In this merit, we will merit the true simchah, as expressed by the prophet (Yeshayah 35, 10): **"ופדויי ה' ישובון ובאו ציון ברנה ושמחת עולם על ראשם, ששון ושמחה"**—**then the redeemed of Hashem will return and come to Tziyon with glad song, with eternal simchah on their heads. They will attain joy and simchah, and sadness and sighing will flee**—swiftly, in our times. Amen.

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