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Gematria on the Parshah: Ad Delo Yada: Going Beyond the Rosh

By: Reb Moshe Herskovits



Out of all chagim, Chazal praise Purim most. The Midrash teaches that when Mashiach comes, all holidays will be nullified except Purim.

Yet with all this praise, how does Seudat Purim culminate? With drinking to the level of ad delo yada. The Gemara says a person must drink until he cannot distinguish baruch Mordechai from arur Haman (blessed be Mordechai, cursed be Haman). What is the deeper meaning of drinking to this level on Purim?

Reaching Emunah Peshutah

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that wine symbolizes revelation. Its potential is hidden within the grape and emerges when crushed. Likewise, each Jew has an infinite neshamah, concealed by the body. On Purim, we drink to move beyond intellect, to reveal the soul's unconditional connection to Hashem.

The gematria of ברוך מרדכי (blessed be Mordechai) and ארור המן (cursed be Haman) are both 502, one more than 501, the gematria of ראש (head). Ad delo yada is connecting to Hashem, beyond the head. Many times in life Hashem's hand is concealed. Yet, the Megillah teaches that even the seemingly negative are part of Hashem's plan of ultimate good. The gematria of 502 is also אמונה פשוטה (simple faith). When a person reaches true emunah, they can accept both baruch Mordechai and arur Haman with equanimity. For everything Haman plotted, Hashem used for the good of the Jewish people.

Story of Emunah Peshutah

There is a story of the brothers Rav Elimelech and Rav Zusha. Once they were imprisoned on false charges, and placed in a jail cell with a toilet. Rav Elimelech was heartbroken; halacha forbids learning Torah in the presence of filth.

Rav Zusha said, "My dear brother, why are you crying? Just as there is a mitzvah to daven when permitted, there is also a mitzvah not to daven when the Torah forbids it. Right now the will of Hashem is that we refrain. That itself is avodat Hashem."

Rav Elimelech absorbed his brother's words, his heart filled with simcha. They began to sing and dance, celebrating that they were fulfilling Hashem's will. The guards, annoyed by their singing, removed them from the cell. They returned to learning and davening with joy. This is emunah peshutah. Our avodah is to serve Hashem from the place we are, not from the place we think we should be. Even when Haman plots, it is a call to come closer to Hashem.

Chazal teaches Hashem's name is not mentioned explicitly in the Megillah, yet when the Megillah says HaMelech it alludes to Him. The gematria of המלך (The King) is 95, the same as המן (Haman). Even Haman is HaMelech. Even concealment is orchestrated by Hashem. Recognizing this is the true joy of Purim.

Reaching Bichol Nafshecha

Another level of ad delo yada is to reach the level of bichol nafshecha. Chazal say that Purim was the day when the Jewish people truly accepted the Torah. At Har Sinai, Hashem placed a mountain over their heads, forcing Am Yisrael to accept the Torah. The Chiddushei HaRim explains that this was metaphorical. There was such a clear revelation of Hashem from the Exodus through Sinai, how could they not accept the Torah?

Purim was different. Hashem was concealed; there were no open miracles. Yet the Jewish people followed Mordechai with self-sacrifice, fasting, and public Torah study. The Alter Rebbe explains that had they abandoned their Judaism, they would have been spared. Instead, they had mesirus nefesh (self sacrifice), willing to risk their lives for Hashem.

The gematria of פורים is 336, one more than סיני (Mount Sinai), which is 335. Revealing the acceptance of the Torah on Purim was greater. Additionally, סעודת פורים (Purim Feast) is 876, the same as ישראל+הר סיני (Israel+Mount Sinai), revealing Purim is the completion of Sinai.

The drinking of Purim reveals the highest level of soul. It awakens the yechidah, the innermost dimension of the soul that is unconditionally bound to Hashem. This level is also reflected in the gematria of 502 which is בכל נפשך (with all your soul) serving Hashem with one's entire being.

Challenge

This Purim, do one act of holiness that goes beyond your intellect, whether that be giving Tzedakah, making peace with someone, or embracing the situation you're in with emunah peshuta.

Clothes Show Who We Are

By: Rabbi Adam Law



Based on the Mei HaShiloach and the shiurim of R. Moshe Lainer, the Radzyner rebbe, shlita

This parsha is dealing with the garments of the Kohanim. Each parsha surrounding מתן תורה teaches us something foundational in Torah. Before Matan Torah the story of Yisro comes to tell us the extreme effort one must go through to receive Torah, to literally change oneself. Then, after, we receive the Torah at Sinai.

Mishpatim shows the Torah's light is not only in the highest of experiences but also goes into all of the minute aspects of creation, of civil society, and even one's possessions. Parshas Terumah is the return of the light- how the divine service raises holiness and returns it back to the creator.

In this parsha we learn about the ideal man. He is the Kohen Gadol. Aharon HaKohen is a different tsadik than his brother, Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe is the great prophet of the Jewish people, but he is somewhat removed due to his superior level of Torah.

The Kohanim are different, the בני אהרן are amongst the people במשך and all of their service and personal-ity are devoted to bringing Yisrael to G-d.

Before they receive the service in ויקרא this

parsha delineates at length the exact garb of the kohanim and the Kohen Gadol.

My Rebbe explains that clothing does two things: it covers a person up, and it shows who they really are. A garment tells us what someone's role is.

In the case of the Kohen Gadol, his clothing show his inner convictions as the ideal Jew.

Firstly, there are four simple white linen garments that every Kohen wears in his service. When the Kohen serves in the temple he removes his individuality to be ביטול in H's light. Linen symbolizes humility and lowliness, as it comes from a flax seed. He wears pants to cover up his nakedness, and other simple clothing, a tunic and belt. He wears a hat to show his submission to the One above.

The Kohen Gadol wears four other garments. As the unique man at the head during his service, he must show לכבוד ולתפארת, glory and splendour (28:2) for the King.

Gemara Arachin says each garment is מכפר for a particular sin. As our representative in the divine service, his actions have profound implications for the people. We see that in Gemara Makkos, the release of "accidental killers" from the עיר המקלט is linked to his death, and he must pray for the welfare of the people.

According to the Mei HaShiloach, the four unique garments demonstrate his inner convictions.

He wears the חֲסִידָה, a girdle that he straps on his waist. It shows that just as it supports him, so too the ideal man realizes that H" is his true and only support.

He wears the מְעִיל, a long techeles blue robe. Blue is the mystery of the unknown that provoke awe and fear. The Gemara says when one looks at this blue in his צִיצִית (fringes) it reminds him of the mystery of the ocean. The ocean reflects the sky, an awesome and unknown mystery. This in turns reflects to the sapphire stone on the throne of judgement, a place of fear of G-d.

He wears the חֹשֶׁן, a breastplate. As the man of form his heart is ever awakened to ruach hakodesh, like the urim v'tumin inside.

On the חֹשֶׁן are the twelve stones for the twelve tribes. This shows the great love for every Jew in his heart.

The צִיץ is not mentioned with the other garments. It is a gold plate which is strapped onto the forehead of the Kohen Gadol. It is רִצּוֹן, divine will, and represents that under all the mistakes, Yisrael's desire is really only to be with the Creator. That's why it has the unique ability to מְרַצֶה for sacrifices brought with improper intentions. The Kohen Gadol's love is so high that he knows that no matter where a Jew is at, he still is always attached to the supreme will, and the Yid really wanted to do the right thing.

The Kohen Gadol is holy and connected to G-d, as it says right on his forehead, written on the צִיץ. His garments show us the inner conviction of the ideal Yisrael.



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When Pain and Joy Come From the Same Place

By: Adam Klasner



We live between two bookends. The Shulchan Aruch begins with one sentence:

"I place Hashem before me always."

It ends with another idea:
"A good heart is always in a state of celebration."

Always aware. Always rejoicing.

At first glance, these feel like opposites. The first sounds serious, weighty. You are standing before the King. The second sounds light. A good heart is always feasting.

But they are not opposites. They are the same root.

As we enter Adar. Our sages say, "When Adar enters, we increase in joy." Not that we create joy from nothing. We increase it. That means joy already exists as a natural state of the soul.

So what blocks it?

The Gemara tells a story. Rabbi Akiva and other sages were walking toward Rome. From a distance they heard the noise of Roman celebrations. The empire that destroyed the Beis HaMikdash was partying.

The sages cried.

Rabbi Akiva laughed.

They asked him, "How can you laugh?"

He asked them, "Why are you crying?"
Of course he knew why they were crying. They were grieving the destruction, the exile, the cruelty of a world that celebrates while holiness burns.

But Rabbi Akiva wanted them to say it out loud.

Because the tears were the key.

They were crying because goodness mattered to them. Because truth mattered. Because the Beis HaMikdash was not a building. It was the embodiment of connection.

Their pain was not superficial. It came from a place that knew what reality is supposed to be.

And Rabbi Akiva answered: If this is the pleasure experienced by those who are disconnected from truth, imagine the joy rooted in truth itself.

He was not fantasizing about a future party. He was revealing something deeper.

If your pain is real, your joy is real.

If you are capable of being shattered by darkness, it means you are anchored in light.

There are two kinds of pleasure in this world. There is pleasure that distracts. It promises relief. It numbs. It entertains. It gives a rush and leaves a hollow space afterward. It is always chasing the next moment.

And then there is pleasure that flows from alignment. From connection. From being rooted in something true. It is quieter. It does not scream for attention. But it leaves you fuller, not emptier.

The first kind is loud.
The second kind is deep.

Adar does not tell us to ignore pain. It teaches us that the deepest joy is born in the same place as the deepest tears.

When you allow yourself to feel grief over what is broken in the world, over what is broken in you, you are touching something infinite. You are touching the part of you that knows goodness is real.

And that place is also the source of simcha.

Real joy is not denial.
It is not distraction.

It is not pretending everything is fine.

It is the quiet confidence that beneath all concealment, there is Oneness. Beneath all chaos, there is meaning. Beneath all exile, there is Presence.

A good heart is always feasting because a good heart is always connected.

Not because life is easy.
But because the soul knows its Source.

As we enter Adar, the work is not to force yourself to be happy.

The work is to ask:
Where am I looking for relief instead of connection?
Where am I distracting instead of aligning?
Where can I choose depth over noise?

Increase the joy. Not by escaping your pain.
But by recognizing that your pain itself may be pointing you toward something infinitely deeper.

Heaven Needs Your Chaos!

By: Rabbi Avrohom Jacks



Some people have perfectly calm spiritual lives. They wake up every day with total clarity. They pray with perfect serenity. You might think that your reality is very different. You might be filled with internal chaos. Your relationship with spirituality feels like a loud battleground. You feel torn between different worlds. You experience massive doubt on a daily basis. You might think this turbulence disqualifies you in some way. You might believe your struggle makes you somehow spiritually defective. The truth is the exact opposite.

In Parshas Tetzaveh we learn a staggering law about the Kohen Gadol. The High Priest had to wear a specific robe called the 'meil.' This garment was required to have bells on its hem. The Kohen had to make an audible sound when entering the holy sanctuary. If he walked into that sacred space in total silence, he faced the death penalty! Think about the magnitude of that consequence. With this law, G-d is sending a radical message to every generation. The High Priest represents the entirety of the Jewish people. If he only brings the quiet serenity of the perfectly righteous into the sanctuary, he fails his mission completely. The divine presence demands the bells. The divine presence demands the noise of the ba'alei teshuvah. The raw struggle of a person fighting for their spiritual life is the exact frequency heaven craves most.

Your messy journey is a divine instrument. The friction you feel is simply the sound of a soul growing. G-d hears your internal battle and considers it holy music. Don't wait for the day your struggles disappear before you decide you matter. The world is desperate for your unique energy. You have a divine responsibility step into your power right now. Your noise is necessary, and your struggle is sacred. So, let the world hear your special, beautiful bells ring.

Becoming a Mikdash Me'at

By: Reb Yacov Aboudi



Parashat Tetzaveh opens with a command that feels simple, but is quietly demanding:

"וְאִתָּה תִּצְוֶה... לְהַעֲלֵת נֵר תָּמִיד."

"You shall command... to raise up a constant light." (Shemot 27:20)

The Torah does not ask for occasional bursts of fire. It asks for ner tamid — a steady, ongoing light. The Menorah in the Mishkan is fueled by "שֶׁמֶן זֵית וְזֵית כֹּתֵית" — pure olive oil, pressed and refined. Light in Torah is not produced by spectacle; it comes from patient, repeated effort. The oil is pressed slowly. The flame is tended daily. Holiness is sustained by consistency.

Chazal teach that even after the destruction of the

Beit HaMikdash, Hashem says:

"וְאִתָּה לָהֶם לְמִקְדָּשׁ מִעֵת" — "I will be for them a small sanctuary" (Yechezkel 11:16).

Our homes, our shuls, and even each person's inner life can become a mikdash me'at — a small dwelling place for the Shechinah. The command of the Menorah, then, is not only architectural; it is personal. We are each responsible to tend an inner flame — a quiet, steady אור — within our own hearts.

The Torah specifies that the Menorah's light is kindled "מִקְרֵב עַד בֹּקֶר" — from evening until morning. The flame is commanded to burn specifically through the dark hours. There are seasons in life when clarity comes easily, and others when things feel heavy or dim.

The Menorah teaches that avodah does not pause for darkness. In the inner Mishkan of the self, we bring light precisely when light is most needed.

The Zohar frames this as a spiritual principle:

"נְהוּרָא אֲתִיקָר בְּחֹשֶׁכָּא" — "Light is most precious when it emerges from darkness." (Zohar I, 31b)

Illumination is measured not by how bright the room already is, but by whether we introduce light into places of concealment. This is true within a person, and it scales outward. A marriage becomes a mikdash me'at when spouses commit to tending light even in tired seasons. A family becomes a mikdash me'at when patience and presence are practiced consistently. A synagogue becomes a mikdash me'at when people show up not only for moments of inspiration, but for the steady work of community.

The Ben Ish Chai emphasizes that constancy in mitzvot builds an enduring פְּנִימִי — an inner light that does not depend on emotional highs. When a person serves Hashem with regularity even in dry moments, that steady avodah forms a vessel that can hold illumination when inspiration returns. The ner tamid is sustained not by passion alone, but by commitment. (Ben Ish Chai, Parashat Tetzaveh)

This theme is echoed in the teachings of the Arizal regarding Chanukah. In Pri Etz Chaim (Sha'ar Chanukah), the Arizal teaches that the lights of Chanukah are revealed specifically at night to illuminate places of concealment. The אור of Chanukah descends into the lowest, darkest spaces. The Menorah of the Mishkan and the candles of Chanukah share the same grammar: light is meant to enter darkness, not wait for darkness to pass. There is a powerful way to reframe what it means to "change the world." Leo Tolstoy once wrote, "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." Judaism has always insisted on this same honesty. There is a well-known teaching attributed to the Chafetz Chaim: a person once said he wanted to change the world. When that felt impossible, he tried to change his community. When that proved too large, he focused on his family. And when that too felt beyond him, he realized that lasting change begins with changing oneself. Only then did his influence begin to ripple outward.

This is the logic of the mikdash me'at. The Menorah is lit flame by flame. A home is built act by act. A marriage is strengthened word by word. We do not wait until we have the power to change everything. We tend the small light we have been given, and over time, that light travels farther than we imagined.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe often emphasized this idea simply: a small candle can push away a great deal of darkness. We do not curse the dark; we light a candle. Even one small, sincere act of goodness brings illumination far beyond its size.

Parashat Tetzaveh reframes what it means to be "inspired." Inspiration is not only a feeling; it is a structure we build. When each of us tends the Menorah within our own mikdash me'at, our homes become sanctuaries, our marriages become places of light, and our communities become spaces where the Shechinah can rest.

