



Getting Drunk Yosef Prigal

There is a common idea brought down by many, (such as the רמח"ל, and others) that the Jewish year spirals. Every month, every day, etc. we have immense potential to grow or descend spiritually.

Each year as we approach Purim's part of the spiral we must question ourselves. Have we grown from the previous פורים, or have we fallen? On פורים it is common practice to drink until the difference between Mordechai and Haman is no longer distinguishable - עד דלא ידע (Shulchan Aruch Siman 695:2).

As I approach this year's פורים I must ask myself, what possible growth could come from such craziness? It's simple to see how easily we can fall every פורים when we give control of our minds to our more primal side, and take a break from the rigorous control our intellect holds us in. However, I don't believe that the purpose of drinking on פורים is to simply lose control. I believe, that drinking on פורים gives us a set time in our busy year/schedule to take a step back and look through a "new set of eyes", un-blinded by our own intellect. Through these "new eyes" we can modify the conclusions we may have come to about ourselves, others, and even the world as a whole.

But why wine? Why not simply have פורים as a day of quiet self reflection? Obviously we already have many answers to "why wine?" Probably the most famous of those being that the miracle of פורים came through the wine. Still, I ask, why does alcohol play such a big role in the celebration of the פורים story?

I think ה' is sending us a message. The message that a quiet פורים of self reflection is not enough. You must get drunk to the point that you start to see the world differently and only then can you come to the realization of the message ה' has hidden in the world.

We are not in control. Yet we may as well be drunk our entire lives as we walk around believing that we are in control. When we are drunk on פורים, finally we see that we truly are not in control, (for some of us) not even of our thoughts or actions. Eventually we must come to terms with the fact that ה' is the one in control. However, just as ה' hid himself in the פורים story so too He has hidden himself in the wine we drink on פורים.

Now that we see ה' is the only one truly in control, we can take the next step.

As the saying goes (Talmud Sanhedrin 38a) "In with the wine out with the true-secrets" but what truth and secrets are coming out???

Aside from our mouths... I think that once we have reached this point we have opened our eyes, the windows to the soul. The windows to our Neshama, a piece of ה', and our connection

to עולם הבא (or עולם האמת). So maybe on פורים we can turn things over, to be ונהפך הוא, and look the other way through the windows and see not just into our true Neshamot, but glimpse as well the עולם האמת.

What will we see in the עולם האמת? We will see everyone for who s/he truly is. The fakers, the ones that honestly try hard, and the whole range of everyone else.

In פרקי אבות it says (1:6) "קנה לך חבר" – "acquire for yourself a friend," so maybe on Purim as a day of אמת, of truth, when you are seeing everyone in this new light, this is the day to go grab the best friends you can have, so for the rest of the year you will have good friends (possibly the hidden צדיק you didn't notice before).

Well anyways, tomorrow while you and your new friends are stewing in your hangovers, try and take a minute to think about these ideas that can change the rest of your year or life and help you continue in your upward spiral.

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