

PurimBurst, 1988

Based on a teaching by Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchiv¹

“Mordechai left the King’s presence clad in royal apparel . . . and the city of Shushan was cheerful and glad.”² The Jews had been saved from annihilation, clearly they had reason for gladness, but why should the city of Shushan rejoice? The answer lies in the spiritual law taught by King Solomon: “When *tsadikim*³ increase [both in numbers and strength] the masses rejoice.”⁴ This is because the holy deeds of *tsadikim* bind creation to its Creator with golden cords of love. This produces great delight for us below, for what is joy but a sense of closeness to the Divine Beloved (whether conscious or not)? Thus when Mordechai (the *tsadik*) was crowned chief advisor to the king, the simplest of people rejoiced. And even the non-Jews, who had no apparent reason to celebrate, felt joy on that day, though they didn’t know why. This is what it means that, “Mordechai left the king’s presence clad in royal apparel . . . and the city of Shushan was cheerful and glad.”⁵

Everyone, at their core, is a *tsadik*, and eventually (in messianic times) our behavior will reflect that fact.⁶ Until then we struggle with our mixed bag of desires, sorting them through and striving to act on those that serve good.

This is the work of the masses (called aspiring *benonim*), to monitor the constant flow of impulses that pass through awareness, cultivating the good ones and dispelling the bad. Not so for *tsadikim*. Their desires are perfectly clean. Their every impulse serves G-d. Their instinctive response to the world always expresses spiritual law.⁷

For a *benoni*, intoxication is risky business. The less alert we are, the more our impure impulses can slip through the censor and perpetrate wrong actions which will only leave regret in their wake. A *tsadik* has no such fear, even his wine-muddled impulses are only good.

On Purim, it is a religious duty to drink wine to inebriation, for on Purim we all turn into *tsadikim*.⁸ After all, the deepest root of every Jewish soul really is pure, as HaShem Himself testifies: “Every one among your nation is a *tsadik*.”⁹ On Purim, when the hidden truth of our soul’s perfection shines through, the census figure for *tsadikim* takes a dramatic spike, for on that day its tally includes the entire population of Jews.

This makes Purim a day when, “*Tsadikim* are [literally] on the increase,” for HaShem opens the channels that connect each person’s *tsadik* level of soul to the world. Whoever can stretch to hold this light has nothing to fear from inebriation, for the impulses that arise from a *tsadik*-soul are always and only G-d serving.

May the sanctity of this day empower our efforts to strengthen holiness. Let “*Tsadikim* truly increase, and let the masses delight.” May the impact of this holy Purim spread throughout the

¹ R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchiv, *Kedushet Levi*, Purim, (ד”ה והעיר).

² Esther 51:8.

³ A term that means, righteous, perfect. A person who has purged his or her entire being of all impurity and of every inclination (even subconscious) to act contrary to spiritual law.

⁴ Proverbs 29:2.

⁵ Esther 51:8.

⁶ Isaiah 60:21, and numerous chassidic and kabbalistic commentaries on this verse.

⁷ R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi, *Sefer HaTanya*.

⁸ This mitzvah has qualifications which are explicated in the introductory section called, “Laws and Rituals of Purim Observance.”

⁹ Isaiah 60:21.

Land and bring rejoicing even to our non-Jewish neighbors, even if they don't know why. Let there be healing in the Holy Land.