

שֵׁינֶה לֹא בְּהֶחָדָשׁ – שְׂכָרוֹת אוֹת ד'צָרִיךְ

Wine in Measure, Not Drunkenness

THE TEACHING

A teaching connected to the Sefer HaMiddos, under drunkenness (שְׂכָרוֹת). Stay far from drunkenness and be careful not to drink more than you can bear; but a little drink, as much as is needed, is good: it broadens the mind.

For the mind, דַּעַת, is clothed in kindnesses (חֲסָדִים). Drinking in measure lifts the mind, and the kindnesses grow with it. Too much strengthens the harsh forces (גְּבוּרוֹת), and makes a person forget the mitzvos of Moshe.

MAIN POINTS

- When one drinks in measure, as fits him, the mind is broadened and lifted, and as the דַּעַת rises, the חֲסָדִים rise and grow.
- So Chazal said: “כָּל הַמִּתְפַּתֵּה בְּיֵינוּ יֵשׁ בּוֹ מִדַּעַת קוֹנוֹ” (עירובין סח.), “one who is appeased by his wine has something of the mind of his Maker.” Appeased: the kindness grows, and one who might have stayed angry lets himself be calmed.
- One who drinks too much and becomes drunk gets the opposite: the גְּבוּרוֹת grow strong, anger and rage (פַּעַם וּרְגֵז), sometimes even the forces of the Other Side (סִטְרָא אַחְרָא), Heaven forbid.
- Drunkenness makes a person forget the mitzvos Moshe Rabbeinu commanded. Moshe is clothed in every Jew, in every limb, reminding each limb of its mitzvah: 248 (רַמ"ח) mitzvos for 248 limbs.
- So Moshe is called “מֹחֲקֵק” (דברים לג:כא), the lawgiver, which adds up to רַמ"ח. And drinking makes him forget them: “פֶּן יִשְׁתֶּה וְיִשְׁכַּח מִחֻקֵּי” (משלי לא:ה), “lest he drink and forget what is decreed.”
- It is the same idea: Moshe is דַּעַת, and the limbs are אַבְרָהָם, the man of kindness, whose name also adds up to רַמ"ח. Da'as clothed in kindness.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

A l'chaim among friends can open the heart and soften anger. Know your measure, and stop while the mind is still clear.

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