

BEING JOYFUL (1)

What's Unique about Simcha?

We are reminded every morning to serve HaShem happily: *Ivdu es HaShem besimcha!*

The Rambam writes: "The *simcha* that a Yid should experience when he fulfills *mitzvos*, and when he loves HaShem Who commanded us to observe them, is a great level of *avoda*... There is no greatness or honor other than celebrating before HaShem."

The Rebbe adds that since a Yid is constantly serving HaShem in whatever he does, it follows that he should always be joyful.

(רמב"ם הל' לולב פ"ח הט"ו, שמחה ובטחון בה' ע' כ)

Abolishing Sadness

Chazal warn us that the *Shechina* does not rest on those who are sad, downhearted, or lightheaded. It only rests where the *simcha* of a *mitzva* is present.

Thus we see that when Elisha HaNavi became angry at Yehoram Melech Yisroel for his wicked ways, the spirit of *nevua* left him – and returned only after music was played before him.

(שבת ל ע"ב, מלכים א' פ"ג)

The Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya* that the only way to defeat the *Yetzer HaRa* is through *zerizus*. And *zerizus* springs from *simcha*; it is not weighted down by worries or sadness. If a wrestler is downhearted and dejected, lazy and sluggish, then even if he is physically stronger, his opponent will easily overcome him.

The Rebbe writes in a letter that one of the *Yetzer HaRa's* favorite and most effective tactics is to make a person sad and downhearted. He looks for an opportune time, such as when that person is weary, for then it is easy to draw him into that heavy frame of mind.

(תניא פרק כ"ו, אג"ק ח"כ ע' קכ"ז)

The Baal Shem Tov taught: "Worry and sadness are the source of all *kelipos*. One cannot serve HaShem properly without *simcha*. The *Yetzer HaRa* tries to persuade a person to be sad for having failed to fulfill a certain *chumra*, telling him that he has committed a serious *aveira*.

That Yid must give him a straight answer: 'This is just a trick of yours to disturb my service of HaShem! For even if I have truly committed an *aveira*, it is now more important to HaShem that I serve him with *simcha*.'

(תולדות יעקב יוסף פ' משפטים, צוואת הריב"ש אות מ"ד)

In response to one *chossid's* complaint of *machshavos zaros*, the *Tzemach Tzedek* advised him to rejoice in his *avodas HaShem*. Since a person's soul inevitably seeks enjoyment, if it does not find that joy in *avodas HaShem*, will seek it elsewhere. Although one must always grow, he must nevertheless rejoice with his current state, and specifically through this joy, he will reach greater heights.

(אגרות קודש אדה"ז-הצ"צ ח"א ע' שע"ד)

A certain *chossid* of stature called Reb Shlomo once shared an unusual experience with his fellow *chassidim*: "Late one night, while I was learning, I suddenly felt the presence of someone sitting near me. Alarmed, I extinguished the candle and went to bed."

"But why?" they asked. "It could have been Eliyahu HaNavi!"

"It wasn't," answered Reb Shlomo. "Eliyahu HaNavi is always happy. This fellow was full of sadness, so I knew he must have come from the *kelipa*."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 147)

The Way Out

Regarding a worry in a person's heart, it is written in *Mishlei*, דאגה בלב איש ישחנה. The last word, *yashchena*, literally means "he should suppress it." However, Rav Ami interprets it to mean that one should remove it from his mind (יסיתה), and Rav Assi interprets it to mean that one should share it with a friend (ישיחנה).

(סנהדרין ק ע"ב)

A *chossid* once told the *Tzemach Tzedek* of the sadness he felt, and the Rebbe told him, "This is truly shocking, for when one says *shelo asani goy* in the morning and recalls that he is a Yid, this alone should give him enough *simcha* to last all day long."

(מגדל עז – מעשי אבותי אות קל"ו)

So, too, a Yid once entered the room of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev and saw him dancing happily whilst saying *Birchos HaShachar*. "Why all the *simcha*?" he asked.

Reb Levi Yitzchak answered, "When I came to the *bracha* of *shelo asani goy*, I thought about the great *zechus* of being a Yid. After all, things could have been otherwise..."

(תורת מנחם ח"ח ע' 172)

A *chossid* once wrote to the *Tzemach Tzedek* that he had difficulty feeling *simcha*. The Rebbe responded, "The thought, speech and action of a person have the greatest influence on his behavior. Therefore, one must make sure to only think thoughts that evoke happiness, to refrain from speaking about negative and dispiriting things, and behave in a joyful manner, even if he is currently not feeling so."

(אגרות קודש אדמו"ר הצי"צ ע' שכ"ג)

The Rebbe gave many reasons as to why one should have *simcha*: HaShem created him; He made him a Yid; He is always with him; He has given him so many things (as we say in *Birchos HaShachar*); and He has enabled us to connect with Him. Besides, we are heading towards *Moshiach*.

To one person complaining about sadness, the Rebbe wrote that one should be so busy doing what needs to be accomplished, that there should be no time to think about sadness.

(אגרות קודש ח"ד ע' תק"ג)

Chazal say, *Mishenichnas Adar, marbim besimcha*. The Rebbe explains (אדר תשנ"ב) that this *simcha* begins with learning Torah, which 'gladdens the heart', and blossoms into action through the performance of *mitzvos*. This leads one to experience actual *simcha*.

(סה"ש תשנ"ב ח"ב ע' 391)

CONSIDER THIS!

Is joy a tool to enable one to serve HaShem through practical *mitzvos* or is it an *avoda* of itself?

A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

Pressuring for Tzedaka

Is it appropriate to pressure someone to give *tzedaka* when he doesn't want to give?

- In a city where there is a *Beis Din* that has full control over the city, one of the responsibilities of the *Beis Din* is to evaluate how much everyone must contribute to the communal funds of *tzedaka* and enforce their decision.¹
- Concerning additional donations to *tzedaka*, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules²: "One who chooses to give more *tzedaka* than he can afford, or donates when solicited out of embarrassment, we may not collect *tzedaka* from him. One who embarrasses him and asks him for funds will be punished in return by Hashem." The *Sefer Chasidim* writes³ that benefiting from *tzedaka* moneys that were given unwillingly is like benefiting from theft.
- *Poskim*⁴ add that even when someone wants to give more money to *tzedaka* than he can afford, it is the obligation of the collector to stop him.⁵ However, *Poskim*⁶ write that on a regular solicitation for *tzedaka*, a fundraiser need not be concerned that the person is unable to afford it and is giving only out of embarrassment, since the giver can easily say that at the moment he cannot donate.
- Whether one may pressure a wealthy person to donate is the subject of a *machlokes*: Some⁷ understand the second clause of the *Shulchan Aruch* (one who donates out of embarrassment) to be including a wealthy person, that, if he will donate solely out of embarrassment, one may not pressure him either. Others⁸ argue that both clauses discuss one who cannot afford it, but if the giver can afford it he may be pressured to give more than he wants to.
- Later *Poskim*⁹ reconcile both clauses: Since it is *mitzva* to give a fifth of one's earnings to *tzedaka*, one may pressure a philanthropist to donate up to a fifth of his earnings to *tzedaka*. However once he has reached that point, even if he can afford to give more, one may not force him to give only to avoid embarrassment.

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your Rov for a final psak.

1. ראה שו"ע גנו"כ יו"ד סי' רמח ס"א. לענין תמיכת ת"ח בהסכם יששכר וזבולון כו'. אבל עכ"פ לכא"ו ברור שהדין הנ"ל במקומו עומד כשאחד נותן באופן שלא יהי' לו ממה לחיות כראוי.
2. שם ס"ז.
3. סי' תתרמב. וראה הגהות החיד"א (ברית עולם) שם.
4. שו"ת תורה לשמה (לבעל הבן איש חי) סי' רלח.
5. בתורה לשמה שם מביא מהגמ' ערכין דלא הניחו לאחד לבזבז יותר מחומש. וצ"ע לדינא, שהרי יש הרבה מקרים דמוטר וראוי לבזבז יותר מחומש, כמו לכפרת עוונות במקום תענית כמ"ש אדה"ז באגה"ת, או כמ"ש הפוסקים.
6. שו"ת אג"מ יו"ד ח"ג סי' צה.
7. כן משמע מהגה' ברית עולם לחיד"א על ספר החסידים סי' שטו ע"ש.
8. ראה פרישה שם סק"ט. וראה גם מה שהובא בהגהות והערות על הטור (מהדורת שירת דבורה) אות ל' מהגה' מכת"י היעב"ץ.
9. ראה שו"ת אג"מ שם.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

לזכות הילד ישראל מאיר שיי

לרגל יום האפשעניש שלו - ה' אדר א'

נדבת הוריו הרה"ת יהודה ליב ורעייתו היענא שיחיו אלמיי

לזכות הרה"ת לייב לייביש וזוגתו שיינדעל יהודית שיי וועקסלער
לרגל התונתם בשעטומ"צ - ו' אדר"ר

OUR HEROES

Reb Yitzchak of Drohvitsh

Reb Yitzchak of Drohvitsh lived in the time of the Baal Shem Tov. He was a *maggid* in the city of Brod and then in Ostroho, and was known as a very holy person. His son became the famous *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Michel of Zlotchuv.



Reb Yitzchak once said: "When I want to go speak to Yidden about mending their ways, the *Yetzer Hara* comes to me and says "Yitzchak! Sit at home and learn! Why should you travel and waste time from your learning." So I tell him I am going to make a little money. "Oh," he tells me, "Then you should go, that is a great *mitzvah*." When I arrive at my destination, I drop the guise and do what I need to do."

Reb Yitzchak concluded, "Sometimes when one wants to do a *mitzvah*, one has to be clever to get past the *Yetzer Hara*..."

When Reb Michel of Zlotchov came to the Baal Shem Tov, the Baal Shem Tov gave orders to show him respect, saying: "You should know that this man is the son of the holy Reb Yitzchak of Drohvitsh. His father did not have a lofty *neshama*; in fact, almost no one of the generation possessed such a plain *neshama*. Only with his tireless efforts did he elevate it to the level akin to that of Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai..."

לזכות הילדה אלה דבורה אייזנבערג תחי' שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

An American Chassunah

In 5719, the Rebbe told Reb Nissan Neminov in *yechidus*, asking him to publicize it:

"I am unhappy with the lifestyle of chassidim in America. A *chassunah* used to be a small, warm affair, where everyone would contribute by making some food, and so everyone felt that they were part of the *simcha*. Here, however, the *chassunah* must be held in a hall, which also adds financial strain on the host.

"Then there is the pressure on the guests to bring a gift, which puts a strain on a friend who cannot afford one, to either go without a gift or to borrow money. Even if a chossid is willing to swallow his pride, and come without a gift, his wife will not hear of it. And so he's pulled into debt..."

"Finally, there is the table plan. Here, the host must place everyone according to their social status, without offending anyone. This also adds extra strain on the host. One could well imagine what kind of *chassidische farbrengen* could take place in such a setting..."

"I obviously cannot tell anyone to act differently; to be the odd one out..."

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה



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