

The Weekly Farbrengens

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ENERGIZING JOY (I)

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 would regularly emphasize that a Yid should always be joyful since he is constantly serving HaShem in whatever he does.

(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*, it 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)

CONSIDER

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

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 זווין 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 (ישיחה), and Rav Assi interprets it to mean that one should share it with a friend (ישיחה).

(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"ע 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 הצ"צ ע' שכ"ג)

The Rebbe gave many reasons as to why one should be happy: *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 תשי"ב) that this *simcha* should begin with learning Torah, which 'gladdens the heart', and then blossom into action through the performance of *mitzvos*. This will lead one to experience genuine *simcha*.

(סה"ש תשי"ב ח"ב ע' 391)

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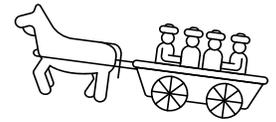
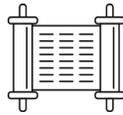


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VIEWING RIGHTS

Can I build an extension to my home if it blocks my neighbor's view?

The Gemara records a debate whether *hezek re'iyah* — invading a neighbor's privacy by looking into his private property — is halachically considered damage. Halacha rules that it is, and neighbors can often force each other to participate in building a dividing wall between their yards, unless a *chazaka* has been established otherwise. Regardless, you may not watch someone conducting activities in his home or property without permission, for he may not want others to know what he's doing.¹

One may not build a window facing into a neighbor's yard that was previously not exposed.² Similarly, opening a window across a neighbor's window is often a breach of his privacy. However, various factors may mitigate this concern, such as if the neighbor's window is already easily visible to the passerby, if it is common practice in that locale to have windows facing each other, or where people usually have window shades.³

What about blocking a neighbor's sunlight or view?

Shulchan Aruch rules that if you want to build a wall for privacy, you must distance it at least four *amos* away from the neighbor's window, to not block his daylight. Contemporary *poskim* note that specific customs and bylaws can necessitate leaving a larger distance.⁴

Blocking the neighbor's view, according to some *acharonim*, isn't banned, even if it will decrease the property's value or prevent the neighbor from watching their children playing in the yard. *Hezek re'iyah* only precludes viewing the neighbor's private area and not blocking a view.⁵

Others argue that it is problematic, especially if it doesn't just block a scenic view but causes a loss by preventing them from watching relevant activity (e.g., workers or children). Moreover, if the window is clearly there for its view, some infer that even the lenient view would prohibit blocking it.⁶ Since the matter is disputed, the neighbor can prevent him from building, but cannot force him to take it down.⁷

If local law or custom restricts blocking a neighbor's view, this is halachically binding, since his purchase of his home was subject to adherence to the local laws. Therefore, he may not build such a fence, even to provide privacy for his own yard.⁸

1. ראה בבא בתרא ס' ע"א, שו"ע חו"מ סי' קנ"ז ס"ט, שו"ע"ר חו"מ נזקי ממון ס"א-ס"ג.
2. שו"ע חו"מ סי' קנ"ד ס"ג, סמ"ע שם סק"ט. וראה פת"ש שם סק"ז.
3. כדאי לצייין שאם חלק מהחלון מתחת לד"א וחלק מעליו יש מחל' אחרונים סמ"ע סק"ז וש"ך סק"ז. וראה שו"ת משאת משה חו"מ סי' ס'.
4. שו"ע שם סכ"א. וראה עמק המשפט

R. HESCHEL NOTA GNESSIN

R. Yehoshua Nasan (Heschel Nota) Gnessin (5600-5681) was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, Rebbe Maharash, and Rebbe Rashab, and a famous Rosh Yeshivah. R. Heschel Nota studied in the Yeshivah in Dubravna under R. Aharon, later the rov of Liozna, and received *semichah* from the Tzemach Tzedek. He served as a Rosh Yeshivah in Starodub, a Rov in Kritchev, and finally as Rov and Rosh Yeshivah in Potchep.

The Yeshivah in Potchep was a famous institution in its time, and many of the *maggidei shiur* and top *talmidim* of Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch were graduates of Potchep. R. Heschel Nota was much beloved by his talmidim.

After the Rebbe Maharash's passing, there was a leadership vacuum in Lubavitch, as the Rebbe Rashab and his brothers refused to assume full *nesius*. R. Heschel Nota and a fellow chossid decided therefore to travel to Kopust, the largest Chabad court at the time. The two arrived in Kopust, and sitting in the *zal* contemplating their state, they began crying. The Kopuster Rebbe, R. Shlomo Zalman, approached them and told them this story:

During the time of the Tzemach Tzedek there was a governmental decree that one of the children of *beis harav* attend the secular school in Lubavitch. Lots were drawn to determine who would go, and the R. Shlomo Zalman's younger brother, R. Shalom Ber (later a Rebbe in Retchitcha) was chosen. When R. Sholom Ber cried about this, the Tzemach Tzedek offered to compensate him by learning Tanya with him for 15 minutes each day. The other children of

beis harav also wished to learn with the Tzemach Tzedek, so the Tzemach Tzedek learned with them all together for 15 minutes, and then learned privately with R. Shalom Ber for an additional 15 minutes.

Over the time of their learning with the Tzemach Tzedek, R. Shlomo Zalman noticed that the Rebbe Maharash (who was around the same age as his nephews) would sometimes stand up and leave for a few minutes, without any explanation. While the Rebbe Maharash was absent, the Tzemach Tzedek would stop the *shiur* and wait for him to return. The Tzemach Tzedek then noted that his son's conduct is unlike his own conduct or that of his father-in-law, the Mittlerer Rebbe, and "his heart is raised in the ways of Hashem."

R. Shlomo Zalman concluded the story by telling the Rebbe Maharash's bereaved chassidim that they indeed have what to cry over. Hearing this story, R. Heschel Nota decided to return to Lubavitch.

(ניצוצי אור - וויינגארטן)

On the fifth night of Chanukah (the day the Alter Rebbe was released from his second imprisonment), R. Heschel Nota would hold a large *farbrengen*. At the beginning of the *farbrengen*, he would make a *siyum* on a *masechta* and deliver a lengthy and complex *hadran*. Some of the local chassidim in Potchep were not happy about this and raised it with the Rebbe. But the Rebbe sided with R. Heschel Nota and said, "*Halevai* there would be more Rabbonim like him!"

(זכרונות מנחם גנסי)

A Moment with The Rebbe



A DIFFERENT QUESTION

A Satmar chossid who was childless, would ask his Rebbe for a *bracha* year after year. One year, to his utter shock, his Rebbe sent him to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

He arranged a *yechidus* for four in the morning, when he felt it sufficiently discreet, and he came with his wife. At the *yechidus*, the Rebbe bestowed a *bracha* with warmth, and referred him to a specific doctor, who eventually assisted him in building a beautiful family.

As he turned to leave the *yechidus*, the Rebbe called him back, "There was *yahrtzeit* recently in Satmar," the Rebbe said, "please share what the Satmar Rebbe spoke about."

After some prodding, he recounted that the Satmar Rebbe had discussed the Gemara's statement (Chagiga 26a) that Jewish sinners are filled with *mitzvos*. The Satmar Rebbe had asked, if they are sinners, how could they possess so many *mitzvos*?

Suddenly he saw that the Rebbe had turned pale and trembled slightly. The chossid now regretted what he had said.

The Rebbe then spoke. "I also learned the Gemara in Chagiga, but I had a different question: If they are full of *mitzvos*, why are they called sinners?"

(As Reb Chayim Meir Bukiet heard it from the Satmar chossid; Hiskashrus, Issue 497)

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