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SIMCHA TALKS

A GUIDE TO INNER HAPPINESS

Adapted from the hebrew shiurim
of "Da Es Simchatecha"
by the author of Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh

<http://bilvavi.net/sugya/daes.simcha>

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Editor's Introduction

Simcha Talks (or Da Es Simchasecha) is a series of 9 classes explaining an in-depth understanding of *simchah* (happiness) – of how we can find and acquire our “inner joy”. They are a companion to a series of 11 *derashos* where the Rav spoke about Purim and the *simchah* that is attainable in Adar and Purim [which are in the collection of “*Purim Talks*” of the Rav]. In *Da Es Simchasecha*, we learn about the more basic level of *simchah* that is attainable during the average days of the year. Some of the key points contained in these chapters are:

- **Most people do not reach true happiness, because they don't know what it is**
- **Happiness is within, not something you acquire from the outside**
- **We need to be heading towards achievement in order to feel happy**
- **We need to be consciously aware of our efforts towards achievement to be happy**
- **We need to feel connected to what we do, in order to be happy**
- **Happiness comes from appreciating our efforts, and not from mere achievement**
- **The difference between happiness and pleasure**
- **The balance between inner solitude and connection to others**

This is a thought-provoking read which will require contemplation, which will fill you with clarity on how to become truly happy – but it requires patience for the “journey” to get there. May we be helped from Hashem to reach true *simchah* in our lives.



דע אַת שמחתך 012

1 | *Defining Happiness*

The Source of Sadness

What is a person's natural mood – to be happy (*b'simchah*), or to be sad (*atzuv*)? Without considering other possible factors that take away a person's happiness - what is a person's natural state? What is the source of our sadness, and what is the source of our happiness?

The source of sadness is clearly explained to us by our Sages. All sadness came onto the world as a result of the first sin of mankind. After the sin, Adam was cursed with the pain ("*etzev*", which comes from the word "*atzvus*", sadness) of hard work, and Chavah was also cursed with "*etzev*", with the pains of child labor. If not for the first sin, it wouldn't be possible for people to become sad.

So we know what causes sadness: sin. But what brings *simchah*\happiness? From where do we get our *simchah* from?

First, we need to define *simcha*\happiness - and then we can know what the source of it is.

The Two Kinds of Happiness

There are two kinds of *simchah*\happiness. One kind of happiness is when I am happy *because* of something; there can be many things that can cause me to be happy. Another kind of happiness is when I am *happy for no reason* at all; just like you can't ask why dirt is dirt and why water is water, so is there a kind of happiness which you can't explain why it is so. It just is.

In other words, there is an external kind of happiness, and an inner kind of happiness.

External Happiness vs. Inner Happiness

The external kind of happiness, which is to be happy based on a reason, is just the absence of sadness – but it isn't really "happiness". The inner kind of happiness, though is *actual* happiness; it is not just an absence of happiness. It is a happiness simply because *that is the way we are created* – to be able to be happy, without any reason.¹

1 Editor's Note: The Rav has spoken more about this concept in Getting To Know Yourself, where he mentioned the observation of the Brisker Rav zt"l, who pondered: Why is that children are naturally happy, whereas adults find it harder to be happy? As we go through life, we go through various circumstances which may harden us and damage the happiness which we were born with (but it is always there, deep down). The fact that children are naturally happy shows us that we are all born with a natural happiness that is not dependent of any one reason.

The first sin of mankind made it possible for a person to become sad; the curses that came to mankind are essentially forms of sadness, which did not exist in the desired plan of creation. Creation became altered through the sin and brought sadness to the world, making it possible for people to become sad. Not only that, but the sin also caused that we need a reason to become happy.

There is a *mitzvah* to rejoice on Yom Tov, but this is also happiness based on a reason. We celebrate all of the *Yomim Tovim* because we were taken out of Egypt. The deeper understanding of this is that the entire concept of Yom Tov came into creation as a result of sin as well. If not for the sin, we would have no need for festivals, because if we need a reason to be happy, this is all the result of the curse given to mankind, so it is cannot be the deepest source of our happiness.

In other words, to be happy “because” of something is that I need to be happy when I *achieve* something. This is the external kind of happiness.

By contrast, the real, perfect kind of happiness is a very inner kind of happiness. This is the happiness of the *tzaddikim*, who “rejoice in Hashem”. The inner kind of happiness is an intrinsic kind of happiness; it is when I am happy for no reason at all. This is the higher kind of happiness, which is experienced by *tzaddikim*.

The ultimate kind of happiness we should achieve on this world is the inner kind of happiness, which is to be happy with one’s intrinsic existence, and not to need any reason to be happy. But this inner happiness is usually concealed from us and it very far from our grasp.

Practically speaking, most people live off of their achievements, and not from their intrinsic existence. Happiness based on achievement is the lower kind of happiness, not the higher kind of happiness. Since that is the reality right now, we will focus our discussion on the lower kind of happiness and on how we can attain it.

Although it is not the ultimate kind of happiness, as we have explained, it is still a kind of happiness nonetheless. Thus, let us try to learn how to achieve it, so that we can at least have some degree of happiness.

Why Most People Aren’t Happy

Most people are not able to have constant happiness, and the reason for this is because they need to always see results, in order to be happy.

But when you are happy only when you get something, it’s like what is written, “*Stolen waters are sweet.*” The sweetness lasts only for when we have it, but when our achievements go away, we no longer have a reason to be happy. Such a happiness is based on what’s new in our life, so when it’s still new to us, it can give us happiness, but when it’s no longer new, the happiness goes away with it. Even the happiness of Yom Tov, which is a *mitzvah*, is only a temporary happiness. It is only three times a year.

In the future we will have the ultimate happiness, which is the happiness of the *tzaddikim*, who “rejoice in Hashem”. For now, we must try to at least have the lower kind of happiness, which is to be happy with our achievements.

Most people today don't even have the lower kind of happiness, because they aren't even aware what makes them happy. Many times you can ask a person, "Why are you happy?" and he says, "I don't know..."

Is such a person happy because he's such a 'happy go lucky' person that everything makes him so happy? That isn't the reason for his response. It is simply that he isn't aware to what makes him happy, and that's why he doesn't know if he's happy.

Awareness To What Makes You Happy

The only way to be happy on this world is, to be *aware as you're doing something* that will lead to your happiness. If you are aware what makes you happy (and you are involved in trying to achieve it), then you can be happy, but if you're not aware as to what makes you happy, then you won't achieve happiness.

If you are aware that you are on the way toward happiness (and you're doing something to get there) you will be able to be happy. But if you're not aware, then even when you get what you want and you're happy, your happiness goes away as soon as whatever you get is no longer here anymore.

You must be aware to what makes you happy, and what makes you sad. This awareness is part of our journey toward happiness, and it has a lot to do with how you are happy or sad.

Being Happy Now, Before You Get What You Want

To illustrate what we mean, let's say a person has a child after waiting twenty years for a child. He is ecstatic, but why? It's not just because he has a child. It is because he waited so long. From here we can see that happiness depends on being aware of your **journey** toward whatever it is that you wanted to achieve. This is called a *tahalich* – a "journey". We must always see the *tahalich* we are on, if we ever wish to be happy.

Let's say a person is happy when he gets to his results, but he doesn't care about what he did in order to get there. If that is his outlook on life, he will never be happy, even when he gets the results he wanted. We can see from one who has a baby after a long time of waiting; he isn't just happy from the results, but he is happy only because he is aware of his journey in getting there. Without that awareness of what he had to go through to get his results – in this case, the birth of a child – he wouldn't appreciate the child. Now that he had to wait so long, his joy knows no bounds when he finally has a baby.

The basic idea we learn from this is that in order to be happy, a person needs to be aware about his actual journey toward happiness. That means he has to be happy, even now - before he sees results. He's on a *tahalich* toward happiness, and he has to see that's he's on that *tahalich*, if he is to appreciate what he's striving for.

We can see that people lose their happiness very quickly, even after they get what they want. This is because they aren't aware of the steps they took to get there and only focus on the results. When people only care about results, then whatever happiness they get vanishes with time.

Happiness – Feeling Like I'm Moving

When a person is doing something in order to become happy, he is really moving. He's trying to gain happiness, so he's moving toward it. The movement itself is what is making him happy (if he realizes it). It is our movements which make us happy.

We can see this from dancing. A person uses his feet to move; what does a person do when he is happy? He dances. He dances with which part of his body? His feet.

The depth behind this is that happiness is when we move. It's not like how we are used to thinking, that we can only be happy when we *arrive* at what we want. Really, happiness is when we are happy with the very steps we are taking in order to get there. Thus, if we don't have this awareness we won't be happy, because our whole happiness can only come from appreciating how we're moving towards it.

We are used to thinking that one can only be happy when he gets his results, and what he did to get there is meaningless; the main thing if he achieved or not. The usual mindset of people is to only value achievement, while efforts alone are regarded as meaningless. The truthful perspective, however, is that a person can only be happy with what he achieved only when he is aware with what he did to get there. Great achievements alone do bring one to have happiness. Only when we realize our efforts – as we are *trying to achieve* - will we be able to appreciate our achievements and receive happiness from them.

Happiness Defined: Awareness of Effort, Plus Achievement

It's really two-fold: The results and the effort together make a person happy. If I am happy with only results but not with my efforts, I won't even realize my own happiness when I get what I want, and I won't be able to keep my happiness. But if when I get my results I am aware that I had to take a certain path to get there – I will be able to appreciate my achievement. So even when you are happy with your achievements, your happiness is really coming from how much you put into it to get there. If you have this awareness, you will be able to be happy with your achievement, but if you are not aware of this, then you won't be happy – even when you finally get what you want.

Thus, the harder the struggle to get there, the more you enjoy the happiness when it comes. Like we see from the father who didn't have children for a long time and finally had a child, he has much more profound kind of happiness, because the path he took to get there involved a lot of perseverance (and he recognizes that). The happiness of your achievement is really based on seeing the *change* to your situation, thus the greater you see how your situation changed from bad to good, the greater the happiness.

The Future Happiness

The happiness of the future redemption will also be this kind of happiness, but on a much higher level. It will be a major change to our situation, and that is why we will be so happy. It will be a very great happiness because of this long, painful exile we are in. The pain of this exile only adds to the quality of the future happiness. The depth of our whole exile is really that most people are only happy when they have results. But in the future, it will be revealed to all people the way to be happy with even the path to get there. Then, our happiness will be perfect. (For now, we cannot reach the perfect happiness, and thus we will have to settle with imperfect happiness, which we are describing).

Knowing Why We Are Happy

What we must ask ourselves is: are we happy with only our achievements, or are we happy even with what we are putting in in order to get there? We need to become aware what is making us happy. The way we are defining happiness here is not what we are used to. We will therefore elaborate more on the definition of happiness, and then these words will appear simpler.

Let's say a person is happy when he achieves something. What does that mean? If you think about it, it's not really a happiness that comes from getting what he wanted. It is really because he breathes a sigh of relief: "It's finally over."

Happiness is really to be happy with whatever it was that brought me to my happiness. How do we know this? Happiness is the opposite of sadness. Sadness is when a person puts in effort and doesn't see results; a person is very sad when he fails after trying so hard to get something. If that is sadness, then happiness, which is the opposite of this, is the other way around: when a person is happy with doing something that brought him to what he wanted.

So happiness is not experienced when I get what I wanted; it is more about getting *to* what I want. Sadness, by contrast is when I don't see results, and thus all my efforts are in vain – which makes me sad. (If I wouldn't base my happiness on results, I wouldn't be sad, because I could just appreciate my efforts.)

This is why it is not possible in this world to be totally happy, because all of us have some fruitless efforts; this makes us partially sad, even though we have other achievements. Chazal praise a person who "rejoices in his suffering". The depth of this is that a person rejoices in the path he is on, which is that he is on his way toward being healed. It's not that he has to enjoy his suffering for the sake of suffering; it is rather that he is happy because he recognizes that he is on a certain path (the road to his recovery, which may involve some suffering).

The Condition Needed

There is a condition for this kind of happiness to work: A person has to be able to see that he eventually will have results from what he is doing now. (This can either be because he has *emunah*, or because it just makes sense that he will see results from his efforts.)

Meaning, if a person just embarks on an unrealistic goal, he won't be able to be happy, because realistically speaking, he can't say that his efforts will get him any results. But if he is on a path in which his goal is a realistic possibility, then he's able to be happy - even before he gets to his goal.

What is the understanding of this? Superficially, this is like when someone is told, "Don't worry, everything will turn out good in the end." But that is not the depth behind it.

A person is sad because he is doing something that is moving along slowly and fruitlessly - it doesn't seem like he's getting anywhere; he's on a path which will not bear any results. Such a person indeed is not able to derive happiness from what he's doing. Why? Happiness comes from moving toward a goal, and a person who doesn't seem to be making any progress in what's he's doing isn't moving.

But if someone is on a realistic undertaking to get toward a certain goal, then he can be happy now even before he gets to his goal, because he's moving along a realistic path to get to a realistic goal, and that's something that can give him happiness.

Now that we have understood this, it is apparent that a person cannot be happy even when he gets what he wanted to achieve if he wasn't aware of how he got there. If a person is happy with his efforts, then he can be happy with his results, but if he isn't happy with his efforts, he won't even be happy either when he gets his results.

How To View Your Failures

Now we can go a step further with all this.

If a person understands this, he is able to make himself happy even "retroactively" – it is possible to undo all your frustration! How?

The whole reason why we ever became frustrated was because we failed in our life at certain situations; all of us have gone through failures and very difficult times. The only reason why we were frustrated at our failures was because we only wanted to see results, and we aren't aware of the happiness we could have been having with the efforts we put in.

To illustrate, Chazal say² that if a person tells you, "I tried, and I succeeded – believe him; but if he tells you, "I didn't try, yet I succeeded" – don't believe him." The depth behind this is that in order for a person to really achieve, he needs to be aware of his efforts. If he wasn't aware of his efforts, then he won't even arrive at his achievement, so don't believe him if he says, "I didn't try yet I succeeded."

When we don't see results from our efforts, it makes us sad. It a death-like kind of feeling not to achieve, and it reminds a person of death, which is epitome of sadness.

But if a person is aware that he is on a path that can lead to results, he can be happy even before he sees results. Not only that, but even if he *didn't* see any results in the end, he can turn all his

² Megillah 6b

frustration into happiness - by becoming aware that he put effort into something. After all, he engaged in a realistic, worthy undertaking. So what if he didn't see results from it? He was involved in trying to achieve a realistic goal. That itself is a reason to be happy.

If we become aware now that we took certain steps to get to our results, then we can make ourselves happy with those efforts, even if they were failures!

In this way, we can turn all our sadness and frustration into happiness; we can clean ourselves up from all the "dirt" (sadness) that has piled up on our soul from all the years until now, and turn all of our bad experiences into happiness – when we remember that what causes us to be happy is our efforts, not our results. The whole reason that we weren't happy in the first place was because we lacked the awareness of our efforts and only focused on the results, which we didn't get. So now, become aware of all your efforts you made (which would have made you happy then, had you been aware of it), and you will discover that all of your frustration can be undone. It's like giving your soul a cleaning.

דע אַת שמחתך 013

2 | *Experiencing Our Efforts*

Essence and Movement

We have said so far that there are two kinds of happiness: an external kind of happiness, which is not really happiness but just the absence of sadness; and an inner kind of happiness, which is an intrinsic kind of happiness. The idea of happiness is not based on achievement, but on trying to get there. We will try to elaborate on this more.

Everyone when they hear this thinks that this is very unusual; people think that it's the opposite, that really a person can only be happy when he achieves something. We will explain why people have a hard time understanding this and what we can do about the problem.

Generally, our happiness comes from our achievements. This is the lower kind of happiness; the higher kind of happiness is intrinsic and it doesn't depend on a reason to be happy. But the happiness that generally exists in our life is the lower kind of happiness, which is to be happy when we achieve something.

The two kinds of happiness are rooted in two different forces Hashem created in the world. There is a force called "essence", (in Hebrew, known as *havayah*) and there is a force called "movement" (*tenuah*).

The lower kind of happiness is based on "movement"; when we achieve something, it is a kind of movement. Thus in order to gain happiness (from the lower perspective, which is *tenuah*), one needs to recognize this movement by seeing how he put in efforts to get to his results.

The higher kind of happiness, which doesn't depend on any factors, is called *havayah* "essence", because it is happiness with one's very essence, and it doesn't need any "movements" for it to be accessed.

People Confuse What Their Happiness Is

We need to know that these are two different kinds of happiness, and people often confuse the two.

When people are happy with their achievements, they think "This is it." They think that the happiness of movement\achievement is really the intrinsic kind of happiness, and that their achievements are what they need to feel the intrinsic happiness. But let's not confuse the two.

If you are happy with what you actually have – meaning, you are happy with you what have achieved in the past – we can still call this an intrinsic happiness, because it means that right now, I am happy with what I have; I'm content with things just the way they are. Although it is a happiness

that involves some factor of achievement, it is actually the higher kind of happiness (*havayah*), because I'm not gaining my happiness solely from my achievements, but rather from the fact that I'm content with my past.

But if I am trying to be happy because I think that achievement will give me happiness (and that effort without achievement is meaningless), then I am mixing up the two kinds of happiness, because then I think that achievement is my essence – a misconception. So you're either happy with you have already, or you are looking to be happy. Don't confuse the two.

Experiencing Your Efforts Brings Your Happiness

Let us bring out the point more. In the previous chapter, we have said that happiness is when one is happy with the very journey he takes to getting to his achievement. This is because in order to really experience the happiness of your achievement, you need to be aware – and be happy with – the very path you took to get to there.

Most people don't reach even this happiness (which is the lower kind of happiness) because they never learned to appreciate their efforts before their achievements.

What does it mean to see the *tabalich* you took toward happiness? To illustrate, a child reads something and only sees what's written on the paper; he doesn't see the *tabalich* of it – he doesn't see how all the information adds up. An adult with a more mature mind is able to connect all the dots; he sees the *tabalich* of something.

Most people are only looking to be happy with something tangible, but they don't see the *tabalich*. Because they aren't happy before they get to their achievement, people don't even end up appreciating their achievement when it comes. When people aren't happy with the *tabalich* to get to their happiness, they aren't really happy even when they finally get what they wanted.

Examples of Seeing the “Tabalich”

Let's say a person is learning a *sugya* of *Gemara* and he's anxious to get to the end, where he will have clarity in it and arrive at the conclusions. When a person learns like this – anxious to get to the end, and wishing that he'd get to the end already of the *sugya* – then he misses out on the happiness he could have gotten from learning.

He has no happiness while he's actually learning it, because he only wants to be happy with getting to the end. He misses the whole happiness he could be having in the *sugya*, because he's not happy with the *tabalich* of getting to his goal; he just wants to get to the goal already....

Even when he does feel a happiness when he gets to his goal, it would only be an imaginary kind of happiness, because he wasn't happy with trying to get there.

All of life is really a *tahalich*. We are constantly on a path heading toward certain goals, and we must realize the *tahalich* and be happy while we're on it. If we understand this, we will be able to be happy. Life is one continuous journey that we take.

Happiness Comes From Seeing Continuity

In order to see how we're on a *tahalich* in life, we need to see life as continuous. The word *simchah* (happiness) actually has the same letters as the word *meshichah*, to continue. Happiness and seeing life as a continuing path are two concepts that are linked together: if one sees how his life is a continuing path, he is happy.

When a person is sad, it's really because he doesn't feel like his life is moving and continuing along. A person has to feel that life's journey is continuous in order to feel happy, and the lack of this feeling is really the source of a person's sadness.

When people get their happiness from various new things that come out, this happiness doesn't last. Why? Getting our happiness from new things only brings us happiness as long as it's new; once a person gets used to it, it loses its appeal. We can't wait for this new thing and that new thing to come out to give us happiness. We can't get happiness from new things – we need instead *continuity*.

It should be noted that although this is only the lower kind of happiness, it is still the only kind of happiness available in the world today. The higher kind of happiness, which existed before the sin of Adam, will return in the future; for now, we must learn how to at least have the lower kind of happiness, which is to appreciate what we have – and this is only by being happy with the *tahalich* to get to something.

Our Struggles Are The Key To Happiness

When a person just wants to get to the goal already and would rather not have the *tahalich* to get there, he doesn't want to deal with problems in life. When a person wants something right now and he feels that he needs something new to make him happy, it's really because he doesn't want to have to struggle in his life; he feels that he must have it, now, and he is too pampered to want to struggle with not having it.

A person doesn't realize that by having this attitude, he deprives himself of the very happiness he could be having in his life.

A wife is called *ezer k'negdo* (a helpmate who opposes the man). This is also a kind of *tahalich*. A wife opposes her husband and often argues with him, and this really helps the husband. It helps the husband see a different perspective when he's opposed by a different opinion. When a husband doesn't appreciate this, though, he's annoyed at his wife when she argues with him. He doesn't realize that she's really helping him by opposing him, because we are supposed to be opposed sometimes in order to improve ourselves. He doesn't see how his wife's opposition to him is really a *tahalich* toward happiness.

Without seeing this *tabalich*, the husband is of course very frustrated at his wife's opposition to him. If he would see how this struggle is really a *tabalich*, he would be able to turn this upsetting situation into a source of happiness. The very struggle would be used as a way to happiness.

Happiness Only Comes From Dealing With Problems

We need to learn how to be happy when we struggle with our problems, because that is how we can see ourselves on a *tabalich*, and then we would derive happiness from our problems.

If we are only happy when we achieve our goals, then we don't have happiness in the *tabalich* and we will never really be happy. If we don't want anyone to oppose us, we aren't happy with the *tabalich*; if a man wishes that his wife wouldn't be his *ezer k'negdo* and that instead she should just go along with everything he says, he's lacking happiness in the *tabalich* and he misses the whole point of the challenge.

This is really the depth of the statement of Chazal that "A man desires his own measurement more than another's measurement." People enjoy their own efforts much more than others' efforts – and really this is because when people feel like they invest effort into something, they have happiness in a *tabalich*. Thus, a very big part of our happiness is our struggles in life.

Simcha, happiness, has the same letters as the word *chamush* ("weapon of war"). This shows us that happiness comes specifically from "fighting a war". We need to fight for our happiness and only then can we become happy. There must be challenges, struggles, problems – and we are to deal with them; our challenges can actually afford us the greatest happiness available in the world today.

The Misconception of Today's Times

Why is it that people today can't deal with struggles?

It is because people seek *menuchah* (serenity), and they erroneously think that *menuchah* means physical comfort. If people want their bodies to be physically comfortable, though, this contradicts happiness. Seeking to be comfortable is really inviting a lot of unhappiness – someone who's pampered and spoiled and has no interest in ever dealing with a challenge cannot ever be happy.

Seeking *menuchas hanefesh* – serenity of the soul – is something else, though. Seeking *menuchas hanefesh* doesn't contradict happiness, and it can only aid one in becoming happy.

Really what we need to do is have physical exertion, together with serenity in our soul. We need serenity, but we should only seek serenity in our soul – *menuchas hanefesh*. We shouldn't be seeking *menuchas haguf*, physical comfort; the *Mesillas Yesharim* writes that man was not created for comfort. It is really when we have physical exertion, together with a calm soul, that we can have happiness.

Most of the happiness that people look for today is based on results, and they never look back to see what they have done so far that was positive.

This is why we can see certain people who change their *kolel* or *chavrusa* every other *zman* (season) in yeshiva; they never reflected on what they had to begin with, so they never enjoy the work they put in, and thus they always end up seeking something else. If a person would begin learning in his *Kolel* or with his new *chavrusa* with an appreciation of the new challenge it represents, he would see himself entering a *tabalich* – and he would be able to find happiness, feeling content in what he has.

Don't Live For The Moment

When people don't have happiness in the *tabalich*, they are only living for the present moment. They only think about what's going on now in their life, and never about the future. Really, a person has to see that now is part of the future – he is shaping the future now. If he has that awareness, he sees how he's on a *tabalich*; otherwise, he just lives for the moment, and he's just taking life as it comes.

When a person lives for the present, it's the same thinking as when a person has a *taavah* (lustful desire). When a person feels a powerful *taavah*, he's absorbed in right now and he forgets the past and the future, and that leads to his downfall.

Thus, seeing yourself on a *tabalich* means to see how the present affects the future.

How To Appreciate Each Detail In Our Life As A Way To Bring Us Happiness

Generally speaking, a person has to see how the present affects the future, and to be focused just on the present is detrimental, because then the person doesn't see himself on a *tabalich*. However, there is a way for a person to derive happiness in the present moment – even if it has nothing to do with the future.

This can be done by focusing on any one detail in one's life - and being happy with it.

To illustrate, the Vilna Gaon said that a person should focus on the page of *Gemara* he's learning right now and not think about a different page of *Gemara*. In this way, a person is focused entirely on the present, and he's not thinking at all about the future – and it helps a person appreciate the present moment.

This is a deep concept, and the idea behind it is as follows: the *sefarim hakedoshim* say that sometimes “a person is able to hold onto something in its entirety just by grasping it a little.”³ What this means for us in practical terms is that in the world, a person is able to take any particular detail he wishes and focus his happiness in it. Through doing this, a person is able to appreciate everything, just by appreciating one particular detail.

But this can only work for one who uses a detail to see how *everything* good in life is in it; if a person just appreciates a detail and looks at it as a “detail”, then it won't bring him this happiness.

³ A statement of the Baal Shem Tov – “oichez b'miktzaso, oichez b'kulo”.

For example, a child will play with a flower and look at it not because he sees everything in it, but simply because he likes the look of the flower. For an adult, who has a more mature kind of happiness, it is not enough to rejoice in a flower in the same way a child appreciates a flower. If we want to use a flower to come to appreciate everything, we must see how a flower is able to be being us to appreciate everything in Creation. In this way, we are using the flower as a *tahalich* to get us to a greater goal – by appreciating its beauty, we could come to appreciate the entire Creation which Hashem created.

Any detail in our life, if we appreciate it as a *tahalich* of a greater whole, can give us happiness through it. This is how we can be happy by focusing on just about any detail in our life – when we are able to take any detail of our life and see how all our happiness can be attained through focusing on it.

3 | *Happiness Through Challenges*

(Summary: So far, we have explained three kinds of happiness: intrinsic happiness (which is a deep kind of happiness that is impractical for us) goal-oriented happiness, and happiness from appreciating details.

The second kind of happiness – to be goal-oriented – is to be happy as we are actually trying to get to a goal. This we explained already, and we also explained another aspect in this – that happiness comes precisely from challenges. Simchah (happiness) has the same letters as the word chamesh, weapons of war. This shows us that happiness can come to us only when we endure a war – when we face our challenges. We will explain what this means.)

Happiness Is Not Pleasure

Let us differentiate between two similar concepts, which are not the same thing: *simcha*\happiness and *oneg*\pleasure.

Pleasure is called *oneg*, which is found mainly on Shabbos. On Shabbos, there is a mitzvah to have *oneg Shabbos*, to have “pleasure” in the Shabbos. On the festivals, we have a mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov*, to “rejoice” on Yom Tov. (Some say that there is also a concept of *simcha* on Shabbos, but we mainly find the concept of *simcha* when it comes to the festivals). So *oneg* (pleasure) and *simcha* (happiness) are not the same thing.

What, indeed, is the difference between pleasure and happiness? *Oneg* (pleasure) is in your actual existence (*havayah*). Our existence is essentially that of *oneg*\pleasure – and on the ideal level, a person enjoys the very fact that he exists. *Simcha*\happiness is the *way* you get there; meaning, when I am happy, I enjoy my existence.

In this series, we are not discussing here the power of *oneg*\pleasure; here we are discussing *simcha*\happiness.

Sadness Comes From Earth, Happiness Comes From Wind

We have begun to explain that being happy means appreciating our efforts to get to our goals, and that the depth behind the happiness is that we overcame a struggle. Therefore, we need to learn how to be happy with our struggles, in order to conceptualize this.

When we feel a challenge, the sadness we feel from it is rooted in the element of earth in creation. Sadness comes from earth, which is a heavy element. Happiness, by contrast, is a “light” feeling, so which element is it rooted in? Wind is the lightest from all the elements. Thus, happiness is rooted

in the element of wind, the lightest of the elements. (Pleasure, though, is rooted in water). What holds back wind? Earth can block wind. This shows us that sadness “blocks” us from being happy, acting like the earth which can block wind.

To understand this on a deeper level, before the sin of Adam, happiness was rooted in the element of fire [we will not go into the depth of this here], and after the sin, the happiness we know of has become rooted in the element of wind, which is the moving force in creation (and as we said, we need to see ourselves as “moving” in order to be happy). Wind can oppose our earth; therefore, we will need use our “wind” to overcome our “earth”, so that we can get back to our natural happiness.

Thus, we must overcome our tendency toward sadness – the state that has now become our natural state, now that we live after the first sin, where we were cursed with “*you are earth*” - by using our power of happiness, the natural state that existed before the sin.

Happiness – Overcoming A Struggle

We have explained that happiness is experienced when we see ourselves on a *tahalich* (on a path or journey) towards an achievement, but happiness does not simply mean to be on our way towards a goal. We can only be happy *if we create something out of those efforts to get there*. In order to be happy, one has to come out of the “path” of sadness that he was taking, and instead arrive at a new “path” - happiness.

(Until now, we only described how to derive happiness from our efforts. Now, we will explain the second part to our happiness, which is to derive happiness from our achievements).

A person’s efforts might either lead toward sadness or happiness. So we can ask: how can a person know if he is headed toward happiness or not? Maybe he’s involved in an undertaking that won’t bear any results?

In Egypt, there was physical labor. It was *avodas perach*, cruel labor, in that the men had to do women’s labor and women had to do men’s labor. They faced two kinds of problems – the hard labor, which was physical pain; and a more spiritual kind of problem, which was that they were “short of breath.” (*koitzer ruach*). They were short of breath because they were doing things that were not for them to do, and this was a spiritual kind of pain.

This shows us that in life, a person can have two different kinds of problems. Our physical problems are rooted in the element of earth, while our spiritual problems are rooted in our wind. If our problems are “earth”-related, then our struggles will be physical, and these struggles don’t bring us happiness. But if our problems are “wind”-related – when our pain is about spiritual pain and frustrations, and if we identify this as our main source of pain in our life - such struggles will actually bring us happiness.

All of us have to go through a certain amount of problems in our life; that is why we are all here. That is how life is. But the question is: what are the things that bother us? If our suffering is spiritual – “*Praiseworthy is the man who suffers...and from Your Torah we are taught*”, then our suffering

revolves around our learning of the Torah, and such suffering comes from the element of wind, which is spirituality. Such problems are the problems we should be bothered about.

What really bothers us in our life? If soul matters are important to us and we have pain with our spiritual struggles, we can arrive at true happiness.

Happiness – after the sin of Adam – is rooted in the element of wind. In order to be happy, we need to give ourselves an increase of “wind” - in other words, we need to search for more “wind”, for more spiritual growth. Therefore, the more we will search to improve ourselves spiritually, the more happiness we give ourselves.

Increasing The Happiness Every Day

If a person every day seeks to add onto his spiritual gains, he lives a life of happiness – a life of consistent gain. A person has to be gaining constantly in order to be happy, and the way to have this consistency is through always adding onto your spiritual vitality.

If someone is only happy when he overcomes physical hardship, he is only happy when he gets to the results; he can't enjoy the struggle. But when a person has spiritual pain, not only does he enjoy what he gains, but he even enjoys the struggle.

Happiness comes from an increase in our “wind” – an increase in our spirituality. Our spiritual gains, on a consistent basis, give us strength to deal with problems.

We bless a *chosson* and *kallah* that they rejoice “*like your Creator rejoiced in Eden.*” How come people lose this great happiness a little bit after the wedding? It is because their happiness is based on externalities, which are superficial. A wedding is a dose of spirituality, but it is only a little bit and not enough to keep the happiness going. The only way to stay happy is to keep increasing the happiness, which is by adding on more and more spirituality every day.

To Want Vitality Out of Life

Happiness is when we constantly increase our quality of life. This doesn't mean to grab on to more and more things in our life. It means to add onto our spirituality. The more wind we add onto ourselves, the more life we give ourselves.

Why do most people fear death? It is because most people think that they are a body, and that everything in life centers around what will happen to their body. For someone who lives for his body, it is indeed very scary to think about death: “What happens to me when I die? My body is no more....”

Everyone wants to live, but from where does this desire come from? It is usually because people think they are a body, and so there is a great fear of death. The “will to live” comes from the body.

Really, the will to live is a power rooted in the soul; the soul has a desire for life, but it desires a life of spirituality; it wants true *chiyus* (vitality). The body, which covers over our soul, misuses this power to have a will for physical interests.

Torah Lishmah

This is really the depth of who truly learns “*Torah lishmah*” – learning Torah for the sake of Heaven. Many explanations are given of this concept, but the simplest explanation of “*Torah lishmah*” is, when someone learns because he feels like the Torah is his very life. Anyone who learns for anything other than this reason isn’t learning “*lishmah*”. Just like a person wants to breathe and drink because he wants to live, so does a person who learns *Torah “lishmah”* learn because he feels like it is his very life-giving vitality – his *chiyus*. The Torah feels like to “life” to him, and it is.

Desiring Spiritual Vitality

We are not talking about having “aspirations”. Certainly we should want to arrive at our aspirations, but we mainly need to have a desire to gain actual spiritual vitality (*chiyus*) in our life. Everyone has many aspirations and goals, but we need *chiyus* now, right this moment. We need to demand for ourselves spiritual vitality. This is not a small side issue to think about - it is a personal, inner redemption to the soul if one has it.

There are ways we make our body happy, and there are ways we make our soul happy. What is happiness of the body? Anything which comes from an external factor – and on a more subtle note, even if it is a spiritual kind of desire – is only happiness of our body. This is because if we don’t consider it to be our will for vitality, then it is just happenstance to us, and it will not give us vitality (even if is spiritual pleasure). Happiness can only come from our will to sustain our soul.

Everyone wants to live, but the question is what kind of life do people want: to be physically healthy - or to have spiritual vitality?

The true happiness one can have is not the regular kind of happiness we know of. Most people are looking for all kinds of fun and entertainment, because they think that this is happiness. But it’s really a form of sadness. In fact, most people never even once experienced true happiness.

Accessing Vitality

Our soul longs for a spiritual kind of vitality; we need to listen to our soul and hear how it desires the real life.

In a time of danger, anyone can feel happiness at the fact that he’s alive; they feel an increase of life and realize how they take life for granted. But usually, no one feels this appreciation of life on a regular basis.

One should therefore pay attention to the times that he feels that he doesn't have vitality and to the times where he feels a burst of vitality. You need to connect to this desire to always want to increase your spiritual vitality -- to desire it constantly.

The fact that we must continuously seek to add onto our vitality is a reality. It is part of the way Hashem designed creation. Usually people think that this means to think: "What have I gained?", but really, it's a connection you must have with your soul.

You need to connect to the point in your soul which seeks spiritual vitality. One who succeeds in concentrating on this point in his soul for a while will see a lot of success in his life.

Two Ways How We Can Feel This Vitality

How can a person have this vitality every day?

One way is through producing *Chiddushei Torah* (new Torah thoughts) every day. This enables one to feel this spiritual burst of vitality we are talking about. But what if a person is not on the level of coming up with *Chiddushei Torah* every day? How can he get spiritual vitality on a daily basis?

Here is something everyone can do, no matter what level you are on. Every person must at least seek a more spiritual kind of life, and to want to add onto his spirituality every day. In order to do this, one has to listen to what's going on in his soul - and he can then hear his soul's longing for spirituality. He should listen to the subtle voice in his soul which is longing for more spirituality, and become attuned to this inner longing.

With the more one becomes attuned to the soul's voice that is calling out to him, the more he will demand more *chiyus* for himself. This is something that is within reach to anyone, and the more a person is aware of it, the more he will demand from himself to add onto his spiritual vitality every day. This is a great key toward happiness: to constantly seek to add onto to your spiritual vitality, each day.

4 | *Happiness Vs. Escaping Reality*

“There is no happiness except in wine”

The *Gemara*⁴ states that in the Temple era, there was no happiness except in meat; nowadays, there is no happiness except in wine. In addition to this, the *Gemara* says that women rejoice with new clothing and jewelry, and children rejoice with candy.

It is clear that these things are not just superficial ways to get to our happiness, but that they reveal to us what an inner happiness is. Let us understand how we can do this.

We know that we have a *mitzvah* to be happy on Yom Tov - as it is written, “*V’somachta b’chagecha*”, (“*And you shall rejoice in your festival*”). But if we need to be happy with the Yom Tov itself, then how are we allowed to rejoice with meat and wine? Don’t we know that the rule is “We do not mix one happiness with another happiness”? Won’t the meat and wine cause us to take our minds off the actual *simchah* in the Yom Tov?

The answer to this is that being happy on Yom Tov is an inner kind of happiness. In order to get to the inner happiness, we need to use something to get to it – through these external factors of meat and wine [for men] and clothing and jewelry [for women]. We aren’t mixing together two kinds of happiness – we are simply using an external tool (physical pleasure) to reach our inner happiness.

Using The Body To Awaken Our Happiness

To illustrate how this works, let’s say a person comes to a joyous occasion, (such as a wedding), but he doesn’t feel happy. What should he do? He needs to awaken his inner happiness through festivity, and that will bring out his inner happiness.

On Yom Tov, we know that we have an inner happiness, and besides for this there is also a time of happiness in the air; it is “*zman simchaseinu*”, a “time of our happiness”. The time of Yom Tov itself is a reality of happiness. But we usually don’t feel this happiness – why not?

It is because our body covers over our soul, and this prevents us from feeling our inner happiness. What can we do about this? This is really why we have meat and wine on Yom Tov. We make the body happy – and through that, we get to our soul.

The whole purpose of meat and wine on Yom Tov is not a purpose of itself. It is there to awaken in us the inner happiness; when we *loosen* our body, by making it happy through the effects of the wine, we are enabled to penetrate past the body’s hold and then tap into our happiness that is in the soul.

⁴ *Pesachim 116a*

Happiness Of The Body

A person is comprised of a *guf* (body) and *neshamah* (a Divine soul). There are a lot of details to this matter, and it is a very complex discussion, with many factors involved. But without getting into all the intricate details of this, this is the general makeup of a person: body and soul.

Happiness is rooted in our soul, while sadness is rooted in our body. There is also an inner kind of happiness and an external, superficial kind of happiness. The external happiness is when we make our body happy, and the inner happiness is our soul's happiness.

Therefore, when we feel happy, let us ask ourselves: "Why am I happy? Is my body happy – or is it my soul that is happy?"

How indeed can we know if our happiness is coming from our body or from our soul? Happiness of the body is when a person loosens up and acts silly (*holelus*), which is not real happiness. It might look like happiness, but let us explain why it isn't, and what it really means to be happy.

Most people [sadly], have not yet revealed their souls. People are usually more aware of their body than their soul, so the happiness that most people look for is happiness of the body. Since this is so, the actual search for happiness that people have comes from the body's hold! This is because the body itself has a tendency toward sadness. We see that people get sadder more easily than they become happy, because since we have a body, the body has a natural pull toward sadness, and this makes us "search" for happiness.

Why is our body pulled toward sadness? It is because the body was made from the earth; the element of earth in a person is the source of sadness. We can see clearly that most people are searching for happiness, and that they are searching for **physical** happiness – comfort or indulgence.

Each person needs to clarify for himself: "From where does my happiness come from? Am I mainly getting happiness from physical pleasures - or from spirituality?"

You must know that if you are searching for happiness of the body, it will never bring you happiness – and it will only bring more destruction to your life.

Happiness Of The Soul

We have explained what happiness of the body is. Now, what is happiness of the soul?

First, let us review what we have said before: Happiness is not solely about what I gain and achieve, but it is about what I *overcame in order to get there*. (The gain is necessary for our happiness too, but when we achieve it, the happiness we have is coming from our efforts we put in to get there).

Our body, by contrast, is only interested in results. Our body's happiness thrives on results; it is not satisfied with effort alone. This resembles what is written, "*Eat and drink today, for tomorrow we shall die.*"

The Desire To Escape Reality – Happiness of the Body

Now, we will go further with this and understand more about the happiness of the body, which is not really happiness.

Our body seeks happiness really **because a person wants to leave his body**. People want to feel like they're on a high, so they can forget about their body and put themselves out of their misery for a bit. Although it is written, **כי בשמחה תצאו**, “*For with happiness we go out*”, the body's happiness doesn't want to “*go out*” “with” happiness – rather, its nature is that it wants to “*go out*” of **itself!** But this is not happiness. The whole wish in a person to “escape” the body is therefore the antithesis to being happy.

Since the body is rooted in sadness, it cannot ever be happy, and thus our body cannot bring us happiness. What is the way, then, for us to be happy? Happiness can only come to you when you have overcome something. The fact that I just want to get out of my situation is only happiness of the body, and it is all about results. The body seeks happiness only in getting something. This will not bring happiness to a person. A person who lives a more materialistic kind of lifestyle always wants to leave his current situation and thinks that when he does so, this will give him happiness. But the happiness of the soul desires happiness because it wants *life* itself – not to only anticipate results, but to *live* life and to get there.

Thus, happiness of the soul is about what I have overcome, while happiness of the body is a desire to escape reality. With happiness of the body, a person doesn't really want to *enter* into *reality* – he just wants to *escape* it. Such happiness is doomed for failure, because with such a hope, there is nothing to really be happy about.

To illustrate why this is so, Chazal say that “Hashem does not rejoice in the downfall of the wicked.” When the wicked perish, this doesn't make Hashem happy, and the depth to this is because it's not enough of a cause for happiness. So what if the wicked perished? It didn't bring anything good; it just got rid of something bad. There is nothing here to be a cause for a happiness, and that is why Hashem does not rejoice in the downfall of the wicked.

The fact that the body seeks to escape itself for a little bit doesn't produce happiness. The happiness which the body seeks is not built on anything; it's all about putting oneself out of his misery for a little bit.

By contrast, happiness of the soul is a happiness that is based on something – it is built upon something. An example of this is *Simchas Yom Tov*, which is happiness that has basis to it. We are being happy about something we have; there is something **here** to be happy about. And on *Simchas Torah*, we are happy over the completion of the Torah – not because it is over, but because of what we **have**. When we truly **have** something, that is a cause for happiness.

Leaving The Element Of Earth To Reveal The Other Three Elements

The natural situation which Hashem created the world with was, an existence of happiness. Creation itself is really a giant, epic situation of happiness. The universe is really one big happy

existence! It is only sin which brought about sadness to the world and altered the natural state of things. Sin, which caused sadness, is rooted in the body, and the element of earth in the body is the source of all sadness. Therefore, the other elements – fire, wind and water – are the elements which we can use to bring us happiness.

Without using the other three elements, a person can't be happy. When a person just wants to escape his element of earth – in other words, when he just wants to escape his sadness, his earth – such happiness is only being imagined. It isn't real. When people just let loose from their body, what do they do? They enter into a fantasy. It's not happiness, and it's just being imagined. Letting loose and having fun is not happiness – it is just provides a person with a feeling of imagined happiness. Real happiness is when one removes his element of earth, in order to reveal the other elements.

In the future, our happiness will be perfect and complete. This will not just be a departure from our element of earth – it will be a state in which our very element of earth is elevated to the higher elements of water, wind and fire. This is why we say on Yom Tov, “*And bring happiness to your land*”. The “land” can also be a reference to our element of earth – that in the future, even our element of earth will be able to become happy, because it will have been raised to the higher elements (water, wind and fire).

This is also why on Yom Tov, the *halacha* is that one has to spend “half the day in personal enjoyment and half the day in spiritual enjoyment” – because the purpose is to elevate our personal enjoyment through spiritual enjoyment. Of course, we are not saying that there is never a point in wishing to leave our element of earth and go out from it. Sometimes it is necessary that a person should want to leave his “earth” a little bit and loosen up. But we are just saying that it is not the main part of our *avodah* in becoming happier. Our main *avodah* is not to “go out” of our element of earth, but to *elevate* our element of earth to the higher elements.

Simchas Yom Tov

Simchas Yom Tov is through meat and wine. This is really meant to make our body happy, and through that, one can awaken his soul's happiness. But if a person is happy on Yom Tov just because there's good-tasting meat and fine wines, he becomes engrossed in the meat and wine and he forgets their whole purpose. The meat and wine of Yom Tov are meant to be used as a tool, not as a purpose unto itself.

We have to uproot our superficial happiness and arrive at an inner happiness. We need to find something to **be** happy about it; it is not enough to just eliminate our sadness. *Simchas Yom Tov*, as well as the happiness that *tzaddikim* have in spirituality, is not just a way to escape sadness – it is to arrive at something to be happy about, to actually **have** something.

Being Aware To Why You Are Happy

When we are happy, we need to become aware why we are happy now. When we feel happy, we need to ask ourselves: Is our happiness coming from our body, or from our soul?

Happiness of the body, which is superficial, is to simply “look” for happiness. It is not about to find what to be happy about; it is just “I want to be happy.” This isn’t yet happiness! You must know if you are just “looking” to be happy, or if you are looking for *what* to be happy about. There is a big difference.

When a person is just searching for happiness, he’s just looking to escape his depression. The happiness he will find will only be the body’s happiness. His search comes from a desire to want to leave his body. What a person really needs to do is to find *what* to be happy about, as opposed to just putting himself out of his misery.

Calming The Body

There is a method people use to try to reach their soul’s happiness, through the body - which is by calming the body, in various ways. This cannot work, however, if the focus is on what one’s body will feel. When a person is mainly concerned that his body just shouldn’t get in the way, then calming the body in this way will be beneficial and it can help one get through to his soul, because here the person is trying to remove his bodily hold with intention to penetrate into the soul. But if a person is calming his body simply because he wants to experience physical comfort, then he’s just indulging in physical pleasure.

We must know that if all we are trying to do is just to escape our misery, then we won’t find happiness. We need to find something to be happy about. To do this, we need to know: what brings out our soul’s happiness? On Yom Tov, there is a *mitzvah* to rejoice with meat and wine. We must understand that these are really just tools we can use to do the *mitzvah*, but the essence of this *mitzvah* is to reveal an inner happiness.

Happiness – To Have What To Be Happy About

Why is it so hard to be happy on this world we live in? It is because the souls of most people aren’t revealed. We need to open our souls. We have to reveal our soul in order to be happy, and by revealing our soul, that will show us what we truly “have” and then we will find our happiness.

Happiness must come from something that we actually have. *Sukkos* is called “*zman simchaseinu*,” a time of our happiness, and it is also “*chag ha’asif*” (the time of harvest), because it is the time in which produce is harvested and gathered together. The connection is that when a person has what to be happy about, when he has his “harvest” that he has gathered together, only then he can be happy. There is no such thing as happiness when there’s nothing here to be happy about; there has to be something tangible here in order for happiness to take effect.

So if all I’m happy about on Yom Tov is the fact that I have good-tasting food, elegant wine, and nice new clothes (all of which are indeed part of *simchas Yom Tov*), this will never make me happy, because this isn’t really what I “have.” Can meat, wine and clothing be considered something you “have”? A person needs to really “have” something in order to be happy...

5 | *Being Aware and Connected*

Happiness In Doing the Mitzvos

Another part of our happiness includes the concept of *simchah b'mitzvos* – being happy when we do a *mitzvah*. Chazal say⁵ that there is no *Shechinah* unless there is “*simchah* of a *mitzvah*” (rejoicing over a *mitzvah*). There is a happiness which is contained inside every *mitzvah* – that is, for one who is **connected** to the *mitzvah*.

A *mitzvah* brings happiness because every *mitzvah* is an action which brings out a certain potential. When our potential is utilized, this brings us happiness. This is the happiness caused by a *mitzvah* – our potential is utilized.

What exactly is this happiness?

Tzavta – Connection

If a person is lonely, he can't be happy; loneliness contradicts happiness. The opposite of loneliness is when one feels connected to something. Thus, being “connected” to something is what brings happiness.

Mitzvah comes from the word “*tzavta*” (togetherness). The essence of a *mitzvah* is to experience a certain connection that comes from it. Only with being connected to something can a person be happy.

To illustrate, when a person is alone, he can't be happy – this we can see from a *chosson* and *kallah*, whom we bless “*Just as your Creator rejoiced in You in Gan Eden of old.*” Hashem rejoiced only when He created “someone else” in creation, so to speak, and that is why Hashem rejoiced on the day that Adam HaRishon was created. Thus, happiness necessitates connection. What exactly this connection is a discussion for itself, which we will soon explain.

It is the *tzavta*, connection, in the *mitzvah*, which brings happiness to a person when he does it. Most people do not experience this happiness when they do *mitzvos*, because they aren't aware of how *mitzvos* can cause a connection. It is thus only great people who are able to be happy just from doing a *mitzvah*, because only they are aware of what is going on behind the act of the *mitzvah*.

Everything in Creation – both inanimate and animate things – can either cause a connection or a separation between one and Creation. Since most people aren't aware of what an action is able to cause, they don't appreciate the *mitzvos*, and don't feel a happiness from doing them – because they aren't using the *mitzvos* to connect to anything. They don't realize that *mitzvos* are all about *tzavta* –

5 *Berachos 30a*

connection. To illustrate, we can find many people who do a lot of *chessed* (kindness) yet they aren't happy. Why don't the *mitzvos* they are doing make them happy? It is because they aren't aware of what they are doing. When you're not aware of what you're doing, that equates into that you're not connected to what you're doing. When you're not connected to your good deeds, you can't feel the "tzavta" in a *mitzvah* – and thus there will be no resulting happiness.

Increasing Our Awareness

When a person does a *mitzvah*, he has to be aware – not just intellectually, but to have a soul-awareness – that this action he is doing is causing a connection and making him more connected [to Hashem]. It's possible that a person learns Torah all day, but he isn't connected to his learning; this is why we can find people who learn a lot of Torah all day, yet they are still not happy; it is because they aren't aware of what their learning does for them, and thus they aren't connected to their learning. When a person doesn't feel connected to his learning, he won't get happiness from his learning. If only people would be aware of what they are doing as they do a *mitzvah*! With awareness, people would be connected to what they do, and they would be happy.

Balancing Intellect With Heart

Although our heart has to be involved in what we're doing in order for us to feel connected to what we do, we must state that we should not either go to the other extreme and only seek to live based on a heart-based life. We need a balance of both our intellect and our heart; to only lived based upon our heart is lowering ourselves from the level of Torah to the level of *mitzvos* without Torah.

A person has an *avodah* to integrate his heart with his mind ("And you shall know today, and you shall settle the matter upon your heart"), for a mind without a heart or a heart without a mind is an extreme kind of life, and extremes are not the way to live. Every good action we do is able to connect us to something, but we have to be aware of this in order to be happy. For example, Chazal say that *dibbur*\speech is a form of *zivug*\connection. Really, speech is supposed to be used as a way for us to connect to other people. When we talk to people, do we realize that we are connecting to them when we have conversations? Usually, we are not aware of the purpose that is behind our conversations, and we forget that our conversations with people are supposed to connect us to others, and that is why we don't often enjoy our conversations with others. We weren't aware of the connection to another that a conversation can cause.

Doing Things That Are "You"

An additional point is that person can't become connected to what he does if he's doing something that's doesn't personify him. It has to be something that is a form of your self-expression in order for you to connect to it.

For example, many people work at jobs that really aren't suitable for them. A person in this situation can't connect to what he does, and he can't be happy with his job.

When it comes to learning Torah as well, many people learn only because they know that they "have to" learn (either because they are getting paid for it, or because they want to be accepted socially where they live), and not because they are really *connected* to their Torah learning.

In our *sefarim hakedoshim*, there are many great levels described which a person is able to come to. Any great person who reached any of these levels – whether it is *yiras shomayim* (fear of Heaven) or *kedushah* (holiness) – they reached it only because they were connected to what they learned; they were *there*.

Making Yourself More Aware

So one should ask himself: "Am I doing things that are 'me'? Or am I doing things that are not really 'me'?"

If a person does something and it makes him sad afterwards, it is because he isn't connected to what he does, and therefore he is too caught up in the physical aspect of the action. This causes sadness, because all actions (without awareness) cause sadness, since they cause a person to become too involved in the physical aspect of their actions. To illustrate, man was cursed with labor, which was in essence a curse of sadness upon the world, by the very fact that now he would have to be very involved with physical labor.

To try to work on becoming more aware of your actions and to feel more connected to what you do, when you walk to *shul* in the morning to *daven*, you can think for a few seconds: "Why am I walking to *shul* right now?" Become aware as you are walking that you are walking because you are going to *daven*.

Start becoming more aware of every action you do – why you are doing, and when you are doing it. This awareness will enable you to become connected to what you do, and when you become connected to the *mitzvos*, you will be able to receive happiness from doing the *mitzvah*.

דע אַת שׁמחתיך 017

6 | *Being Happy With What You Have*

“Someach B’Chelko” – Happiness With Our “Share”

The *Mishnah* in *Avos* states, “Who is wealthy? One who is happy with his lot (*someach b’chelko*).”

It’s clear that this doesn’t simply mean that one is happy with whatever he has if he doesn’t have anything to be happy about. We all need something we can hold onto to be able to say of it that we are happy. “*Someach b’chelko*”, “one who is happy with his share”, will only ring true for one who indeed reaches his “*cheilek*” – when he truly reaches his allotted “share” in life.

Most people are not happy with what they have, because they have never reached their own “*cheilek*” yet (whatever it may be). They don’t even have a *cheilek* yet to be happy about!

The truth is that it can be said of all people haven’t reached their own *cheilek* yet. This is because a person’s happiness is perfect and complete only if he has uncovered his entire soul (which consists of five parts)⁶, and most people have not uncovered their entire soul. Since most people have not uncovered their soul in its entirety, how then is it possible for us to be happy?

Sadness From “Heaviness”

The answer to this is based upon a statement of Chazal, which says that a merchant feels sad after a sale, while the buyer is happy. We can understand why the buyer is happy, because he’s happy with the item he bought; but why is the owner sad? Didn’t he want to sell it so he could make money off it? He is sad because when he sells it, he has mixed feelings about it. He wanted to make money, but it was hard for him to part with his merchandise. He feels as if he had to do it, but he didn’t really want to.

This teaches us about what makes a person sad or happy: people like to choose what they want, and not to feel dragged into something. When a person feels dragged into something, we can compare this to a heavy item being dragged, and “heaviness” comes from the element of earth, which is the root of sadness.

Enjoying The Moment

Really, every person has a certain “*cheilek*” in life, but each person is able to find what he has in his life to be happy about. But the problem is, that even when a person finds what to be happy about in his life, it is usually only temporary happiness; it doesn’t last.

⁶ The Arizal (*Shaar HaKavanos*, 6) says that the five parts of our soul are *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshama*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*.

The solution for this is to change our attitude toward our “temporary” happiness. When you feel happy about something you have right now in your life, even if you know it won’t last, you can enjoy it now and be happy with it. Enjoy the moment - and accept that what you have now will eventually go away. This fact doesn’t have to ruin your happiness. You can be fully aware that you’re only temporarily happy, yet that this doesn’t have to take away your happiness.

The problem is when people feel that their current happiness will be permanent, when really it is only temporary. If a person wants to hold onto his happiness forever, he’s doomed for sadness, because he thinks it is permanent happiness when really it is just temporary. Instead, a person should be fully aware that whatever he has now is only temporary – and enjoy it anyway.

When a person thinks that his happiness is permanent, he attaches a feeling of security to his current happiness, and this leads to frustration. Nothing is guaranteed to last; when a person feels that something is guaranteed to last, he gets security from it, and when he is disappointed to see it not live up to his expectations, the result is sadness.

With anything you have to be happy about, realize that it’s not everything – it is only a *cheilek*. Be aware that it’s only passing – and you’ll find yourself enjoying whatever you have.

Realizing That Everything Is Temporary

Happiness consists of three factors: being happy when we are on a path to get to what we want (which we spoke of previously), getting to the goal (which we also spoke about), and now have added on a third factor: to have the attitude that what we have now to be happy about is indeed only temporary.

When we are speaking here of the concept of “*someach b’chelko*”, we are not referring to each person’s destined *cheilek* in spirituality that is unique to each individual’s soul. That is the higher level of “*someach b’chelko*”. We are describing a more basic kind of happiness that is “*someach b’chelko*” – to view whatever you have as temporary, and that nothing is permanent.

For example, if I like my house and am happy with it, the proper attitude I need to have is that it’s my *cheilek* – it’s what I have temporarily. If I think my house is permanent and I feel security because of my house, my house won’t provide me with happiness.

But if I’m aware that my house is my *cheilek* for now, even though it’s temporary – I know that it’s all mine, but I am aware that it’s only for now and it’s not forever – this is how I can receive happiness from anything that is my *cheilek*.

If I have any particular item, there are two different attitudes to have toward it – one of them will give me happiness, and the other will not. If I’m happy because I’m engrossed in something I have, then really I’m attaching permanence to it. It won’t give me happiness. But if I am aware that I’m just using it as a tool to get something, then I will enjoy it and be happy with it.

That is this world: either we can choose to become engrossed in all that’s available in the world and think that this will give us happiness (which it won’t), or we can look at everything in this world as just something we need to **use** as a tool somehow.

If a person is connected to just about anything on this world because he's all wrapped up in it, this makes him sad. But if we connect to what's available on this world only because we realize that we have to make use of it – we will find ourselves being happy with anything.

7 | *Tiferes – Inner Harmony*

Tiferes - Beauty

The *Midrash*⁷ lists ten different expressions of *simchah* (happiness): *simchah*, *sasson*, *tiferes*, *gilah*, *rinah*, *ditzah*, *chedvah*, *tzahalalah*, *alitzah* and *alitzah*. Earlier, we discussed the joys that are called “*simchah*” and “*sasson*”,⁸ and elsewhere, we explained the joys of *tzahalalah*⁹, as well as what the joys of *gilah*, *rinah*, and *ditzah* and *chedvah* are¹⁰. Now let us see what the joy of “*tiferes*” is.

The third kind of *simchah* is called “*tiferes*”, “beauty.” The garments of the *Kohen Gadol* were worn *l’kavod u’litiferes*, “for honor and for beauty.” Is it beautiful clothing which makes a person happy? We find that a man gladdens his wife on the festival through giving her new clothing in honor of the festival. Is this the happiness that is known as *tiferes*? What is the *simchah* of *tiferes*? Let us try to understand it.

Deriving Happiness From Your Power of Netzach\Victory

The *Gemara*¹¹ states that Hashem is unlike human beings; when a human being is defeated, he is sad, but when Hashem is “defeated”, so to speak, [through prayer], He rejoices.

The understanding of this is not that although Hashem was “defeated”, He still remains happy in spite of this - it is rather *because* He is “defeated”, that is why He is happy.

What is the difference between human happiness and the happiness that takes place on High, which we must ultimately learn how to connect to?

When it comes to human happiness, there is happiness upon being victorious. Why is a person happy upon succeeding at overcoming something? It is because each person has various *retzonos* (desires), and when one fulfills his *ratzon*, he becomes happy. There are many *retzonos* which we all have, and whenever these *retzonos* are actualized, we become filled with happiness. Take a look at reality and you can see this. A person wanted something, he got what he wanted, and he becomes happy. Thus, when a person’s will is achieved, the result is happiness.

However, there is a rule that “He who wants a hundred, will want two hundred.” When a person has a hundred and he wants two hundred, and he gets it, he will be happy. Pursuing the desires of this world is like drinking salty water, as the Vilna Gaon says; it seems to fill a person’s thirst when

⁷ *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson*: 34;

⁸ See “*Getting To Know Your Happiness*” chapters 01, 02, and 06

⁹ See “*Getting To Know Your Happiness*” - chapter 04

¹⁰ See “*Getting To Know Your Happiness* – chapter 09

¹¹ *Pesachim* 119a

he attains these desires, but soon after he is thirstier than before. At the very moment where he is achieving his desire, he will experience happiness, but his happiness from this will eventually go sour and he will be led towards sadness.

People are happy because they have achieved some kind of victory, when they have overcome some kind of obstacle that got in the way of their happiness. This is true even if a person hasn't won a war; as long as a person has gotten past some kind of opposition which was preventing him from achieving his will, he will feel happiness upon being victorious. However, what the person doesn't realize is that he hasn't addressed the root. He may have gotten what he wanted now, but soon after his happiness will cease, and he will return to sadness. He has only achieved one of the things that he wanted, but he didn't get the root of what he wants.

There are many desires contained in our *ratzon* will. When we achieve only one of those desires, there is some joy that comes from getting it, but it is just one of the many desires that we have, and therefore this joy is short-lived. We will still continue to want more things, even after we have gotten something that we wanted. "He who wants a hundred, will want two hundred." The joy that comes from getting something we wanted is dependent on whatever we will want at this particular moment, so as soon as we will want something else, the joy will quickly vanish. It is an ongoing cycle of unhappiness, where any happiness that is reached will only be fleeting, which quickly follows with sadness.

When a person gets something he wants, he feels victorious. But this is all being imagined. When he thinks he has been victorious in getting what he wanted, really he has been defeated in the process, because he is only being led to further unhappiness, when he derives his happiness from getting what he wants. His *ratzon* will never really become fulfilled.

Now we can understand what the joy of "*tiferes*" is. *Tiferes* is described in the language of our Sages as the blend of all the many different colors of the spectrum coming together, which forms a beautiful sight. Every color is different than another color, and they are really opposites; for example, blue and red are totally opposing colors. The beauty of *tiferes* is that all the opposite colors come together and form something beautiful. When opposites are connected together, this is the beauty that is *tiferes*, and this also forms a *netzach*, a certain "victory", because the opposites have "succeeded" in uniting together.

Tiferes is therefore a happiness that comes from uniting with that which opposes me; to be able to contain opposites.

Aharon *HaKohen* was the *Kohen Gadol*, and he was the first to wear the *bigdei kehunah*, so he is the root of this concept. Aharon *HaKohen* attained a unique gifted character in which he was able to harmonize opposites together. He was able to rejoice for his brother Moshe when Moshe was granted leadership over him, and he could be at peace with this. The deeper understanding of this is that he rejoiced even upon being "defeated". Moshe represents *netzach* (victory) and Aharon represents *hod* (glory), and *hod* is from the word *hodaah*, to admit, because his *hod* could "admit" to the victory of *netzach* and be at peace. On a simple level, it was because Aharon was able to happy for Moshe's victory, but the deeper understanding of this is because he was able to be happy upon being defeated, which is a resemblance of the *simchah* of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, who is "happy" upon being defeated.

If I can connect to that which opposes me, there is resulting *simchah*. The natural reaction upon being defeated by another would be to feel apart from the one who has defeated me, where there would be a separation between the defeated (me) and the one who has been victorious (the other). But if I can still feel a loving connection to the one who has achieved victory over me, I am then allowing myself to connect with the *netzach*, and this will result in *simchah*.

Thus, Hashem rejoices when He is “defeated” by His creations, because He is able to contain them, even though they oppose Him. This is the depth of the verse, “*Hashem rejoices in His actions.*”

Happiness From Ratzon

Let us try to understand this deeper.

There are two places in the soul where we can draw forth happiness from. There is a happiness we can draw forth from our *ratzon*, when we get what we want. Sometimes we want something in particular and we get it, which offers us some happiness. But there is another kind of happiness that can come from our *ratzon*: when we want only one thing alone, and we get it. That is a much deeper kind of happiness.

Deep down in the soul, there is only one will alone. “*Retzoinenu laasos retzoncha*” – “It is our will to do Your will”. And, “We only have one heart, towards our Father in heaven.” When we are interested solely in this one desire alone, and we attain it, the victory in achieving it will last forever, and this is the deeper *simchah* that comes from *ratzon*. This will also be the happiness of the future (and this is yet one angle alone of the happiness that will be experienced then).

When a person has many desires, he may achieve some of them and feel happy from these achievements, but ultimately he will become sad from all of these fulfilled desires, because he is really being “defeated” each time with the more he seems to be “victorious”, thus he will continue to desire various things, setting himself up for a recipe of unhappiness. But if a person centralizes all of his desires into one desire alone, this one desire he has will not cause him to desire many various different things, for he only wants one thing alone. He enables himself to be happy from this *ratzon*.

To illustrate this concept (of desiring one thing alone), let’s consider the idea of rejoicing in doing the *mitzvos*. What is the *simchah* in doing a *mitzvah*? Of course, we are happy after we do a *mitzvah*, and that is true, but what is the depth of this *simchah*? If I have one *ratzon* alone, then every time I fulfill this *ratzon*, I can be happy from it. I can constantly experience this happiness every time I achieve the one *ratzon* that I have. If all I want to do is to do the will of Hashem – which is expressed in doing a *mitzvah* – there is resulting happiness, because I have succeeded in attaining my one *ratzon*.

The fact that I will continue to want to do Hashem’s will afterwards, doesn’t take away from my *simchah*. This is because it is a continuation of the same *ratzon*, and not “another” *ratzon*. This is the depth of *simchah* in the *mitzvos*. Although there are 613 *mitzvos* and with many branches of them, they are not many *retzonos* a person must have; rather they are many branches of one single *ratzon*, the *ratzon* to do Hashem’s will. It might seem like they are many *retzonos*, but they are really all one *ratzon* alone.

(I must emphasize that as long as we live in this current dimension of time, there is no complete *simchah* in the world, and it will not be here until the future. Whatever happiness we can attain nowadays is only relative in comparison to the perfect happiness of the future).

There is happiness we can attain from nullifying our *ratzon*, and there is also happiness we can attain in achieving our *ratzon*. The current level of happiness available to us is the happiness in achieving our *ratzon*, which is represented by Moshe. The happiness of the future, where all of our desires will be nullified, is represented by Mashiach.

Normally, a person is happy upon getting what he wanted. He wanted something, he got it, so he is happy when he achieves that victory. (On a more subtle note, his happiness is coming from the very fact that he wants). If a person at first didn't want something and then he wanted it, and he is pained by the fact that at first he didn't want to achieve; he will derive happiness from the very fact that he wants something now. This happiness does not come from actualizing his desire, but from the very fact that he wants. The amount of happiness he will experience will depend on how much he wanted something.

But if a person is happy from the fact that his desires have been nullified (*bittul haratzon*), this is the joy of “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem.*”

Havayah and Ratzon

Hashem “rejoices”, as it were, in His creations. This *simchah* on High is a *simchah* in existence (*havayah*) itself, and this was the *simchah* that existed before Creation. After Hashem created the world, He has *simchah* in His *ratzon*. Thus there are two levels to *simchah* – the “lower” *simchah* comes from *simchah* in *ratzon*, and the “higher” *simchah* comes from above the *ratzon*, which is *havayah*.

Now we will explain how this applies personally to our souls. In our soul, there is the existence itself of the soul (its very *havayah*), and there are the various forces contained in the soul. There are thirteen general faculties of the soul¹²: *havayah* (existence), *emunah* (faith), *taanug* (pleasure), *ratzon* (will), *chochmah\machshavah* (wisdom\thought), *binah\hisbonenus* (understanding\contemplation) *ahavah\chesed* (love\kindness), *yirah\gevurah* (reverence\strength), *hispaarus\rachamim* (compassion), *netzach* (victory), *hodayah* (submissiveness), *hiskashrus* (connection), and *shiflus* (lowliness). This is the general structure of the soul, as explained according to our Sages¹³. One source of our *simchah* can come from our faculty of *ratzon*. A second source of our *simchah* can come from our *havayah*.

In our soul, there is the essence of the soul itself, which is our *havayah* (existence), and there are also the garments of the soul (the 13 soul faculties), and the root of all these garments of the soul is the faculty of *ratzon* (will). There is only one essence of the soul, whereas the garments of the soul are many, for there are many *retzonos*. There is *simchah* we can derive from our very *havayah*, which is the happiness described in the verse “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem*”, and there is also *simchah* we can derive from our *ratzon*.

¹² Refer to *Getting To Know Your Soul*

¹³ Rav Hai Gaon

The name of Hashem is the name of *havayah*, which is not allowed to be written, because it is above Creation. Hashem is called on this world with the name “*Adon*” (Master), which represents the revelation of His *ratzon*. The soul contains *havayah* and *ratzon* as well, and therefore, there is no soul which does not have garments (nor are the garments without a soul).

For this reason, a person cannot derive all of his happiness just from *havayah*, from the mere fact that he has an existence. That is a happiness which comes from before Creation, and if a person would try to live in it, he is denying the bounds of the Torah, which apply to the current level of Creation we are in. He would be denying the design which Hashem created the world with. Our *simchah* is therefore derived both from the essence of our soul (our *havayah*) as well as from the garments of our soul (our *ratzon*).

From the perspective of our soul’s garments, our *simchah* is derived from our *retzonos*. From the higher perspective, which is from our soul’s essence, our *simchah* is drawn from *havayah* itself. But if one tries to draw his *simchah* only from *havayah*, he is trying to place himself completely in the state of before creation (where there was *simchah* only in *havayah*), and he is being heretical. He wouldn’t rejoice in anything that came after creation, such as the day where we received the Torah or when the *Beis HaMikdash* was built, because he would only be happy with the state of before creation.

We must be happy with the many “garments” that Hashem created, which is His *ratzon*, not His *havayah*, and this is how Hashem has willed it. There is a statement in the Zohar¹⁴, “He and His will are one” – from a subtle understanding, there is happiness in “Him”, and there is also happiness in “His will”. If one would attempt to draw forth *simchah* from either “Him” but not in “His will”, or in “His will” but not in “Him”, either of these scenarios are the roots of heresy that we find in the world.

To have some understanding of *havayah*, we know that there is such a concept of “*ones*”, one who is exempt from doing a *mitzvah*, due to various circumstances which do not enable him to fulfill the *mitzvah* which are not his fault. When a person does a *mitzvah* willingly, this is the level of *ratzon*, but if he is forced to do it, this is “*ones*”. But by the giving of the Torah, we were forced to accept it, because our very *havayah* demands that we have the Torah, whether we have a *ratzon* for it or not. We must also have a *ratzon* from it, but we are obligated in it due to our very *havayah* which Hashem has designed us with.

Tiferes – At Peace With Contradicting Desires

Let us now return to understanding the *simchah* that comes from *tiferes*, which is when we unite with that which opposes us and we can contain them. There are two levels of how *tiferes* can reveal *simchah*.

One way is when we reveal opposites and we can contain them. When a person has many *retzonos*, his *retzonos* reveal opposites. This is a deep point to understand, as follows.

¹⁴ Brought in *Nefesh HaChaim shaar IV*

Our good and evil inclinations are both called “*yetzer*” – we have a *yetzer tov* and a *yetzer hora*. The word *yetzer* is rooted in the word *ratzon*. Whenever we want something, we always want something else which is the opposite of that thing. This is the deep reason of why we are not able to perfectly happy even when we get what we want. It is because for everything that we want, there is something else we want which contradicts it, due to the contradicting forces that are within us (our *yetzer tov* and our *yetzer hora*).

For this reason, the *simchah* we attain from getting what want is never complete, because deep down, we always want something else at the same time! Even when we want something, we are not always consciously aware that we really want something else at the same time, which completely contradicts what we want. In other words, we are really not sure of what we truly want! If you think about this, it can change your entire perspective towards yourself.

Now we can see what the joy of “*tiferes*” is. It is when a person can be at peace with contradictions, with that which opposes him. A *tzaddik* reaches this level completely. He recognizes the contradicting desires within himself yet he is at peace with it, and he sees all of these *retzonos* as offshoots of the inner *ratzon* of the soul, which is the desire to do Hashem’s will. (This is not referring to the concept of nullifying the *ratzon*, but to be at peace with it even when it is contradicted by some other *ratzon*.) This is the depth of how we can derive *simchah* from within our very *retzonos*.

Normally, contradicting desires within us cause us to be sad. Either we can nullify those desires (*bittul haratzon*), which will bring us happiness, or, we can be at peace with the contradictions (*tiferes*). But when we notice the contradicting desires, we need to see them all as “garments” and offshoots of one desire alone – the desire to do Hashem’s will.

In summary, our *simchah* must come from both our *havayah* (our existence itself, which is part and parcel with Hashem), and our *retzonos* (which must be unified into the desire to do Hashem’s will, through doing His *mitzvos*), and together, these two forces of the soul are the sources of *simchah* that we can currently attain.

8 | *Alitzah - Maintaining Our Revelations*

How Laziness Affects Happiness

Let us continue to discuss *simchah* (happiness). We have mentioned earlier the words of *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson*¹⁵, which lists ten kinds of *simchah*. One of these kinds of *simchah* is called “*alitzah*” (עליצה). Let us examine this joy that is known as “*alitzah*”.

The word “*alitzah*” is from the word “*olatz*” (עליץ), which has the same letters as the word עצל\atzel, “lazy”. This implies that the term “*atzel*” is the opposite of the concept of “*olatz*”, for the letters of these words are arranged in an opposite manner of each other. If *atzel* refers to evil laziness, then its opposite term, “*olatz*”, must be referring to a rectified and holy form of laziness, where “*atzel*” (עצל) becomes *olatz* (עליץ). If so, there is a certain joy which comes from *olatz*, from “holy” laziness.

Let us try to understand: Why is laziness the opposite of happiness? And what is the holy laziness which serves as the source of the joy that is known as *olatz\alitzah*?

Holy Laziness

The root of the concept of “holy laziness” is found with women, as the *Talmud Yerushalmi* brings regarding the search for *chometz*, that women cannot be relied upon, for “Woman are lazy”. In contrast to the *Kohanim*, who are known for their zeal in performing the *avodah*, women reflect the opposite of zeal, in their nature of laziness. The deep reason behind this is because woman was created from the rib of man, which in Hebrew is the word *tzela* צלע, which has the same letters as the word עצל (lazy). For this reason, women are naturally drawn towards sadness, which comes from the laziness inherent in the nature of woman (for as we explained above, laziness is a source of sadness).

But when woman connects herself to man (through marriage), her aspect of צלע becomes rectified and instead she rejoices in her union with man, just as Adam and Chavah rejoiced together in Gan Eden. This joy is *alitzah*, and it is also expressed in the verse, “עליץ לבי בקרבי”, “*My heart rejoices within me.*”

Thus, there is a kind of happiness that a person attains through attaining a level that is the antithesis to laziness. This reveals a whole new source of happiness which we haven’t yet learned about in the previous chapters. Normally, we define happiness as the opposite of sadness, so when we remove sadness, there is subsequent happiness. But there is another source to happiness: when we remove laziness.

¹⁵ *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson* 34

Movement and Happiness

Let us reflect into this and see how laziness is the antithesis to happiness.

In simple and clear terms, it is because happiness is attained through movement, as we explained in the earlier chapters. We explained that there is happiness in existence itself (*havayah*), which is the level experienced by *tzaddikim*; and there is happiness in heading towards a goal, as we also explained about, and there is also happiness in movement, which is alluded to in the verse, “*For with happiness, they go out.*”

Happiness requires movement. Laziness is when movement becomes slowed and heavy. When a person is lazy, either he will move slowly and lethargically, or he will not move at all. Happiness is enabled when a person removes the “heaviness” within his movements.

This is the simple understanding of how laziness prevents happiness, and in turn, how removing laziness will enable happiness. But there is also a deeper understanding of it, as follows.

The Difference Between Evil and Holy Laziness

We know that laziness is rooted in the element of earth in the soul, as Rav Chaim Vital writes. But there is a more inner root to laziness.

The letters *ayin* (ע) and *aleph* (א) are often interchangeable; they have the same sound, but the letter ע\ayin has a lower connotation, while the letter א\aleph connotes the higher, rectified level. When a person is lazy due to the heaviness in his movements, this is lower [evil] laziness, which is spelled “*atzel*” (עצל), with the letter ע. But there is a higher, holy form of laziness, which is spelled “*aitzel*” (אצל), with the letter א. The word *aitzel* אצל means “near”, hinting to being “near” Hashem. In other words, there is a kind of holy “heaviness” in one’s movements where one stays close to Hashem and he doesn’t budge from there, using his “heaviness” for holiness. This is called “holy laziness” (*atzlus d’kedushah*).

Evil laziness (*atzel**atzlus*) stems from a dominance of the element of earth. It causes a person to be unable to budge from his place and it prevents him from being productive. Many times people are in a situation which is not good, and they admit that it is not good, yet they are still too lazy to pull themselves out of there. It is not because they think that it’s good for them to remain there. They may know very well that it’s detrimental for them to stay there, but they stay there anyway, simply because they are affected by laziness and heaviness.

By contrast, “holy laziness”, or higher laziness, *aitzel*, does not stem from “heaviness” in one’s movements, but from a genuine will to stay in that place. A similar idea to this is the concept of “*Atzeres*”, to “remain”, where we “remain” with Hashem for one more day during the festival of Sukkos, because we have a hard time leaving this closeness. Such “heaviness” is holy. When heaviness causes evil laziness, it is called *keveidus*. When heaviness is holy, it is called *kavod* (honor), reflecting the holy desire in a person to dwell in a place where he can bask in the *kavod* of Hashem. This is holy\higher laziness, *atzlus d’kedushah*, or “*aitzel*”.

Alitzah – A Feeling of Heaviness, Upon Taking Leave of Higher Revelations

Based upon the above, we can now have a better understanding of what the happiness of *olatz\alitzah* is.

Until now we have explained this in general terms, which is that when a person comes out of the element of earth, his movements become lighter, and he can then rejoice, “*My heart rejoices within me*”, which is the happiness of *alitzah*. A person has been weighed down by heaviness and laziness, and now that he can move freely and lightly, there is a *simchah* that he can feel. This is the general description which we have been explaining until now; now we will add on another facet of understanding to this.

Holy laziness - *aitzel* - is really the result of happiness. When a person reaches *aitzel*, he is “near” Hashem and he does not want to budge from there. Of this it said, “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem.*” When one is “near” Hashem, of there it is said, “*Joy and splendor are found in His place.*” When one must eventually take leave of higher spiritual state he has reached, where he feels closer to Hashem, he feels some kind of heaviness that is holding him back.

This is the “holy laziness” of *aitzel*, and it contains two aspects: it will feel painful for him to leave the closeness, but along with it, there will be a mark of happiness that he remains with from it. That mark is essentially the happiness of *alitzah*. He has a degree of happiness in this heavy and forced movement as he is pulled away from the closeness to Hashem, because although it is painful for him to take leave of the spiritual state of the closeness, there is a mark of happiness left from it.

When he leaves the closeness, though, he is actually not leaving it totally, because he still remains with some of what he has attained from the closeness. That is the nature of this “holy laziness”, and it provides a person with happiness that is known as “*alitzah*”.

Happiness Upon Experiencing Revelation

Holy laziness (*aitzel\olatz\alitzah\atzlus d'kedushah*), as we pointed out before, is the rectified form of *atze\laziness*. The word “*atzel*” (עצל) is from the words על צל, “*al tzeil*”, “above the shadow”, hinting to how one must go “above” (על\al) all of the “concealment” (צל\atzeil\shadow). Our soul contains two areas – “concealment” (*hester*) and “revelation” (*giluy*). “Concealment” is the lower dimension of the soul, and “revelation” is in the higher dimension of the soul. Happiness is reached when we go to the place in our soul which is above concealment, where there is revelation – thus, the soul rejoices when it experiences revelation.

This is also known as the joy of “*gilah*” – “revelation” – which is one of the expressions of *simchah*\happiness. Another example of this concept is the joy of “*chedvah*”, which is from the word “*chad*”, “one” – hinting to the unified dimension which is above all of the concealment.

Similarly, we find that there was happiness by the *Simchas Beis HaShoeivah*, which was filled with light that extended to all of Jerusalem. When there is light (*ohr*) there is joy. The light of the *havayah* of Hashem is what the *tzaddikim* rejoice in, and this is what is written, “*The righteous rejoice in*

Hashem.” When a person is in a place of light, he rejoices. When he has to leave it, he is saddened, and he feels forced to leave it. But he emerges from it with a mark of joy that he experienced there.

In simpler language, whenever something becomes revealed and clearer to us, we experience happiness. This is called *gilah* (joy upon revelation). When we have to leave that revelation, but we have succeeded in maintaining that revelation to some extent, we have the joy of *alitzah*. This is “holy laziness”: when one wants to remain in the holiness, when he wants to be above all of the concealment.

Alitzah – A Mixture of Sadness and Happiness

Now we can understand how there are two opposite points contained in *alitzah*, resulting in a bittersweet feeling, where we experience mixed emotions of joy and sadness. When we gain clarity and revelation of something, we are joyous, and upon leaving that revelation, there is a heavy feeling.

For example, if a person had a period in his life where he was growing spiritually, until a certain point came where he stopped, he looks back at it with fondness. He has a mark of happiness left from it, even though he is no longer there in the past; and he has a heavy feeling, wishing he could have never left it.

This “heaviness” will come as a feeling of have a difficult time leaving the revelations, and it also contains sadness. On one hand, a person has some happiness as he slowly takes leave of the revelations, because he remains with a mark of it, as we explained; but at the same time, as he slowly leaves the revelations, he feels a certain sadness from this as well.

The Inner Sadness: Feeling Distanced From Our Root

Thus, there is an entirely different source for sadness than what we have discussed in the previous chapters. It is a more inner and deeper kinder of sadness, when we take leave of higher revelations.

The normal kind of sadness we are familiar with stems from the element of earth in the soul, which is what Rav Chaim Vital describes. But there is also a more inner source for sadness: when the soul feels that it is being distanced from its Root.¹⁶

Let us understand that this is not the same kind of sadness which mankind has been plunged into ever since the sin of Adam, which is the curse of “*you are earth*”. The normal sadness which affects mankind stems from the base element of earth in the soul, which became the dominant force in man ever since the first sin. Here we are referring to a higher dimension of the sadness which was present in the general curse of sadness as well: the sadness that man has now that he has become distanced from his Root. By sinning, Adam was told to leave Gan Eden. He had to leave all of the closeness he had with Hashem there.

¹⁶ Editor’s Note: This is referring to the *nefesh Elohis* (the G-dly layer of the soul). The normal kind of sadness which comes from “earth” stems from the ‘earth’ in the *nefesh habehaimis* (the animal layer of the soul), whereas inner sadness (of feeling far from our root) stems from the *nefesh Elohis*. Refer to the Rav’s series of *Fixing Your Earth*.

That was an entirely different aspect of the sadness, a higher aspect of the sadness – the sadness of being distanced from our root, where all was good.

The Depth of Being Happy With Our Personal Share

Earlier, we spoke about the concept of “*someiach b’chelko*”, being “happy with one’s share”. Based upon the above, we can now have a deeper understanding of this. Any time that a person experiences some kind of revelation, he can attain happiness from it. If one understands this point well, he will have much to be happy about. He will find many aspects of his life which he can rejoice in.

If we think about it, there are many parts of our life where we can clearly see “revelation.” For example, any person who merits to sit and learn Torah during day and night, he is constantly being shown revelations – via the Torah. There are an endless amount of revelations of the Torah; there is always more to learn in it, both in quality and quantity. If we see our Torah learning as a constant state of “revelations” in our life, we will experience happiness from it. It is the happiness of “*gilah*” – the happiness upon “revelation”.

But as we explained, every time a person experiences revelation, eventually he takes leave of it, so there is sadness that comes with it. We have sadness every time we become distanced from our the spiritual. For this reason, it is not possible for there to be perfect happiness in the world. The perfect happiness will only be here in the future.

Even the revelations that we have today, which provide us with joy, are only partial revelations, not complete revelations. For this reason, the happiness we derive from revelations today cannot either be a complete, perfect happiness. When we have revelation (*giluy*), we also feel exiled (*galus*) from it at the same time, because we are currently in exile, so we cannot enjoy the full revelation of something. There is some sadness mixed with the happiness, because we are only experiencing a partial revelation, and not the complete level.

Mitigating The Inner Sadness of Soul Upon Being Distanced

Therefore, whenever one experiences revelation, he should also identify the concealment that is contained in it, which doesn’t allow for the full revelation. This is because ever since the sin of Adam, everything contains a mixture of good and evil. There are always opposing points in everything in Creation. In whatever we encounter, there is always an opposite point.

(On a deeper note, there is a deep place in the soul which is above all of the opposing points, but in the external layers of our soul, which we mainly experience our life from, we can see opposing points in everything).

The reason why we should get used to seeing concealment within revelation (which is an example of seeing opposing points in something), If we are used to seeing opposite points, it will be easier for us to make the transition from revelation to concealment, when we inevitably leave the revelation and we fall back into the concealment.

Let us consider the two opposing points of happiness and sadness, which are opposite traits of each other. On one side, we have happiness, and on the other side, we have sadness. If our soul keeps vacillating between happiness and sadness, this is a vicious cycle, and the very transition between these states is difficult. How do we mitigate this situation? We must form a “bridge” the happiness and sadness, so that we will have an easier time making the transition.

We can't always be in a situation of trying to leave sadness and to enter into the revelation of happiness, because now that we live after the sin of Adam, there will be times of sadness in our lives, which inevitably we cannot avoid. Life contains both happiness and sadness; there's no way around the sadness. All we can do to mitigate this situation is to have a “bridge” in between the happiness and sadness. On one hand, we must know how to leave sadness and enter into happiness, and we have been explaining this in the previous chapters, where we learned about all the parts contained in *simchah*. But at the same time, we also need to build a “bridge” that will enable us to properly leave the revelations of the happiness and back into the inevitable sadness, and then we can make the transition properly. In this chapter, we have explained what that “bridge” is that we need to build.

To “cross over” from sadness to happiness is easier to do, unless it is an extreme change, because extreme changes cause pressure to the soul. But in a normal situation, a person will find it pleasant to make the transition from sadness to happiness. Also, a person usually does not experience sudden happiness after he was sad; he usually receives it gradually, so it is a pleasant transition, which doesn't strain the soul. But when we make the inevitable transition from happiness to sadness, this is difficult for the soul to handle.

A good example of this is our situation of exile, where we fell from our spiritual plateau and we experienced destruction, which our souls did not handle well. It is very difficult for the soul to make the transition from revelation\happiness into concealment\sadness. What is the way for us to survive exile? When we remind ourselves of Hashem's promise that He is always with us, it mitigates the situation for us. In this way, we have a “bridge” between two opposing points (redemption and exile) even as we are in exile, and then we have an easier time “crossing over” to the redemption when it comes.

If a person did not learn to see how Hashem was with him during exile, then he won't be able to deal with the redemption either when it comes! He never learned how to see redemption within the exile, so he has never trained himself yet to “deal” with the revelation of the redemption when it will come. One has to see the revelation already now in this exile.

This is the depth contained in the joy of “*alitzah*”. It is when one feels a heaviness upon leaving revelation of higher level, yet at the same time, he experiences a contradicting feeling of remaining with a “mark” of the revelation, which helps him maintain some of the happiness that he experienced. That mark enables him to continue on, even though the revelation is gone, and this enables the person to make the proper transition between happiness and the inevitable sadness of feeling distanced.

9 | *Alizah – The Joy of Connection*

“Alizah” – To Be Above the Strange Languages of the World

The Midrash lists ten terms for *simchah* happiness, and the last kind of happiness mentioned in the Midrash is the term “*alizah*” (עליזה). Let us try to understand what the joy of “*alizah*” is. [This is not to be confused with a similar term, עליצה “*alitzah*”, which was discussed in the previous chapter].

The root of this word, “*olaz*”, עלז, is a rearrangement of the letters of the word “*laaz*” (לעז), which means “strange”. The word לעז “*laaz*” can also mean to “spread a bad name about someone”, which connotes a lack of friendship and connection towards the other person. The word לעז “*laaz*” is synonymous with the term “*zar*”, “stranger”, as in the term *avodah zarah*, idol worship, which is *zarah*, “strange”, for a Jew to do; because it is something which he should not have any connection with.

Thus, the term לעז “*laaz*” “strange”, which is the opposite rearrangement of the letters of the word עלז “*olaz*” happiness, hints to us that *laaz* contradicts *olaz* *alizah*; in other words, when there is “*laaz*”, there cannot be *olaz*, happiness.

The word “*laaz*” can also mean “strange language.” When we were redeemed from Egypt, from a country that did not speak our language of *Lashon HaKodesh*, only then were we able to rejoice and proclaim the festivals that remember the exodus. The Sages say that one of the main reasons why we merited redemption because we did not change our language. Thus, the fact that we kept our language is a reason for happiness and redemption, along with the fact that we were redeemed from a foreign country which did not speak our language.

When there is “strange language”, *laaz*, there cannot be a situation of *olaz* happiness. The word לעז “*laaz*” can also be read אל ז' “*al zayin*”, “above the seven” – a hint to being “above” the “seven” nations of the world. This further illustrates the idea that *laaz* refers to the strange languages of the world, represented by the gentile nations, who are the antithesis to the holy language of the Jewish people. The words אל ז' stand for עלז, *olaz*, or *alizah* – thus, there is happiness when we are above all of the *laaz*, the “strange language”, of the rest of world.

When we left Egypt, we became a nation, and that was the happiness of our redemption. Therefore, the happiness which we experienced was a result of being raised above the nations, where we made into our own nation. The happiness of the festivals is called ורוממתנו מכל הלשונות, “We were exalted above all languages”. When we were redeemed from Egypt, we were raised above the seventy languages of the nations of the world, and that is what depicts the happiness of the festivals, which celebrates the exodus. This exultation above the “strange languages” of the world is the joy that is *alizah*. As long as a person is connected to strange languages, he is within *laaz*, and he cannot have *olaz* *alizah*. Only when he separates himself from that connection to the strange languages can he be enabled to rejoice.

Let us try to understand what it means when a person has this detrimental connection to *laaz*, to “strange languages”, and how being redeemed from it will bring a person to *olaz*, rejoicing. What is the joy of *olaz\alazah*, the opposite of *laaz\strangeness*?

Lack of Connection To Others Prevents Happiness

A classic example of *laaz\strange language* is the generation of the Tower of Babel, where Hashem mixed around their languages and dispersed them throughout the world. What happens when a person is speaking in a different language to another, which the other can't recognize? There is no understanding between them, so they will not connect with each other.

Consider the following. Two people can be talking to each other, and still not understand each other. Reuven is talking, and Shimon is “listening” with his ears to what Reuven is saying. Why does he listen with his ears, and not with his mouth? Clearly, it is because we hear with our ears, and not with our mouth. However, we find that when Hashem spoke to Moshe, He spoke with him “mouth to mouth.” Shouldn't it instead be called “mouth-to-ear”? Hashem spoke to Moshe's ear, not to Moshe's mouth. Why then was it called a “mouth-to-mouth” connection?

Whenever people speak with each other, there is a speaker and there is a listener. Reuven speaks to Shimon using his mouth, and Shimon hears Reuven with his ears. But we see from the concept of the “mouth-to-mouth” connection that there is a new angle of understanding in how we can communicate with each other, as we will soon explain.

What is the deeper reason of why we hear with our ears, and not with our mouths? The *Gemara* has an expression, “If you hear me, you understand (what I am saying), and if you don't hear me, you don't understand (what I am saying).” Thus, when we hear with our ears, we are only hearing what we understand, but not necessarily what the other person is really saying. We hear another person talking and we decide if we agree with him or not. So every time we hear with our ears the words that another person is telling us, we are only “hearing” him through our personal understanding of his words.

In all of the seventy languages of the world, a person does not actually hear the other person's words when that person is talking to him. He hears what he *understands*, and he is not hearing the actual words that are being said to him. He will hear what he understands of what is being told to him, but he is not hearing the other's actual words. All of the speech, words, and conversations that take place in the world are really missing a listener. Almost none of these words are really “heard” by anyone. (There was only one time where people truly “heard” something, and that was at Har Sinai, when everyone “heard” the Ten Commandments.)

In all of the words that we hear from others, we are only accepting what we understand, and not the words that are actually being said. Our entire sense of hearing today first passes through our perception, and that is how we hear anything. So we are only “hearing” what we understand; we are not hearing the words themselves that are being told to us. We are always listening from our own perspective, and not from the speaker's perspective.

For this reason, many times a person can be listening to another person talking to him, and he hears something else entirely. Reuven tells him A, and Shimon hears B! Why does this happen? It is because as Reuven is talking, Shimon is thinking about the ideas Reuven just presented, and Shimon's mind wanders off into another realm – all in the line of the conversation, of course. Shimon looks like he is listening to Reuven, but the reality is that he's not even listening. He is hearing what he himself understands Reuven is telling him, but he isn't hearing what Reuven is telling him.

We can see it happening all the time. People don't even "hear" what the other is telling them. Their thinking process interrupts and distorts their hearing, and when Reuven tells Shimon "A", Shimon hears "B".

Thus, we usually only "hear" with our ears, not our "mouth" – because we aren't capable of hearing with our "mouth", the true connecting force between two people. When we "hear" others only through our ears, this is superficial hearing, and we never really listen to others. As soon as we listen, we only hear what we *understand* - not what the other is really *telling* us. All of us have this problem.

This is the "*laaz*", the "stranger attitude" which we have deep down towards others when we hear others speaking to us. It is as if we are always hearing a "strange language" which we do not recognize. This is *laaz*, and it is the antithesis to "*olaz*", joy. When we don't really connect to others and we have a stranger-like attitude towards them, this prevents us from happiness.

Believing That Others Have Their Own Understanding

Now we will try to understand how indeed we can really "hear" when we hear others talking to us. Understandably, we will never be able to hear others perfectly, because as we explained, our very design in Creation doesn't allow us to really hear the words that others are saying to us, and the only time in Creation where people truly "heard" anything was by Har Sinai, where we heard the Ten Commandments. But on our current level which we can reach, let us try to learn of how we can hear others as best as we can, and to gain the happiness that is available to us from this.

When we left Egypt, we were 600,000 souls. This implies that our happiness which we felt by the redemption is connected with the fact that we were so many souls [each with a unique share in the Torah].

When a person hears words of Torah from another, there are two parts to what he may be hearing. He may be hearing his own style of thinking in the Torah, which is his "unique portion" of Torah, which he is hearing in another's words. He is hearing his own *da'as* (way of thinking) in another's words. But there is another way to listen to another's words of Torah: when someone else is speaking words of Torah to you, you can hear *his* share in Torah that is unique only to him – for he, too, has his own unique share in the Torah.

All 600,000 souls in the Jewish people that left Egypt also stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah. If so, each person was able to hear the unique share that each person has in the Torah.

Now let us see how we can apply this personally within our own lives. Let's say two people are learning Torah together, and they get into an argument, lasting for 10 minutes, or for 15 minutes, or a half-hour. After some time, one of them begins to think that perhaps the other is right. Does he really think that the other can be right? Or is he just thinking that the other is right only according to his unique soul root? Can he accept that his *chavrusa* might be totally right?

If he cannot accept that his *chavrusa* can be right just as much as he can be right, then deep down he believes that his own way of thinking is the correct one. That is why he cannot accept that his *chavrusa* might be right. Even if he does believe that his *chavrusa* may be right, it's because it is aligned with his own thinking, but not because he really believes in the other's thinking. Anything he hears from his *chavrusa* is really "strange language" to him.

Compare this to a person talking in *Lashon HaKodesh* to a person who only understands English. The person who only understands English will only be able to translate what he is hearing into English, and he is hearing his own translation, not what the other is really saying.

But if a person would believe that another person can have *da'as* just as much as he has *da'as*, and that there are different ways of thinking, which can both be truthful – such a perspective will enable a person to draw forth happiness.

The Rambam says that if a person eats alone on the festival and he fills up his stomach with food, he has merely made his own stomach happy, and he does not fulfill *simchas Yom Tov*. In order to fulfill *simchas Yom Tov*, one must gladden others. Happiness is only possible when it includes others. In contrast to mourning, which is a state of solitude and silence, happiness needs to be celebrated with others, in order for it to be happiness. Why does happiness require you to include others in your space? It is because happiness comes only when one believes that just as the truth may be found with him, so can the truth be found with others.

The Balance Between Solitude and Connection

When one remains in his own *daas* and he cannot relate to the *daas* of others, he will live alone, and he will be placed in a profound kind of sadness. This is a deep source for sadness.

How do people deal with this kind of sadness? Most people will ease their loneliness by blending in with society and losing their individual identity, because they are afraid of being seen by others as individuals. They will end up doing what everyone else does and thinking like how others think; as the Rambam says, people are influenced by their surroundings. Although "Avraham Avinu was one individual" who did not do like the rest of the world, most people are afraid to be like the Avraham Avinu who is apart from how the rest of the world thinks. They are afraid to become original thinkers, because then that will mean being alone and apart from others, and that would make them feel like loners. That is why many people do not like to stick to their own unique thinking.

By contrast, the joy of *olaz\alifah* means to be strong-minded in the truths that you believe in and in your own unique thinking, but at the same time to be able to believe in the *da'as* of others. It is when you believe that just as you have *da'as* and it can be true, so can others have *da'as* and it can be true. This results in happiness that is called *alifah*, and when it is missing, there is sadness.

The sadness of loneliness is a much deeper kind of sadness than the sadness which superficial people go through. It is a sadness that is only experienced by people who live very inwardly and in their own *daas*. Although they might know how to be very strong in their own *daas* and they live very inwardly, if they cannot relate to the *da'as* of others and believe that others too can be right, they become lonelier and lonelier, and they experience a very deep kind of sadness. The more a person lives inwardly, the more he separates himself on an inward level from others, and the more he will feel alone and apart from others, where his loneliness will get more and more painful.

This is what a superficial kind of looks like. When a person is an infant or a toddler, he has no concept of separating from others. But by the time he's five or six years old, he might start to realize that he has nothing to do with people outside of his home. When he gets a bit older, he will start to realize that he cannot be friends with every person he meets, and he will acquire an ability to separate himself from others. But at a certain point, he will feel a need for happiness. What will he do? He will want to feel like he is a part of something, so he will want to connect himself to a certain group of people. In this way, he receives a feeling of being "one" with others, and he derives happiness from this. He may affiliate himself with a certain *chassidus* or a certain group of people, because he does not want to remain in his own way of thinking, because it would feel terribly lonely and it would sadden him.

Thus, when a person lives superficially, he will have a fear of becoming alone from others, because deep down he senses that this will cause him to become sad.

But if a person lives more inwardly, the more he enters deeper into himself, the less he will feel dependent on surroundings. Although every person needs to feel like they are connected to something, which cannot be avoided, a person is supposed to penetrate into a deeper place in himself, where he can be alone from others, just as Avraham was one individual who did not follow the trend of the rest of the world. Most people do not reach the place of "alone" because they are simply do not feel emotionally ready to handle what it will be like to be "alone".

Sadness comes from feeling alone, and happiness comes from feeling a connection outward. If a person reaches a true place in himself, he reaches the place of "alone" in himself, where he feels the truth of his individuality; that there is truly none other like him. The reason why a person would not want to enter that deeply into himself is because he fears become alone. What, then, in the way to go about this properly?

When one reaches his true "I" out of being conceited, when he reaches his "I", he will think that everyone else in the world is wrong, and then he will feel truly alone. But if a person reaches his inner self from humility, and not out of a conceited feeling, he will instead feel that he is connected to everyone, so he will not feel alone.

If it is conceit that is motivating him to enter inward into himself, the more he enters inward, the more alone he will become. He will separate himself from everyone and nullify their existence in his eyes; "nullified like the dust of the earth", like nullifying the *chometz* on Erev Pesach. He will feel lonely and he won't be able to handle the loneliness.

But if one reaches his individuality and he can also believe that others too have their own individual way of thinking, he will reach the place of "alone" in himself, yet at the same time he will

not be alone. He will be “alone” only in his own *da’as* - but he will not be “alone” from the truths of others.

Connecting To The Spark of Truth Contained In Everyone

This is the depth of how “Moshe is *emes* (truth), and his Torah is *emes*”. Every secret in Torah was told to Moshe at Har Sinai, every last *chiddush* which anyone will ever produce, even though there is much to debate about each *chiddush*, because Moshe could contain all of the possible angles of understandings, for they are all true. This is an inner place in the soul which can connect a person to the root of all the souls in the Jewish people.

Some people connect to the root of the Jewish people through *ahavas Yisrael*, but there is also a way to connect to the Jewish people through *emes* (truth); through believing that every Jew contains *emes* [the way being described here].

There are two parts to the *emes* contained in each Jew. One angle of it is for one to believe that he contains *emes*, and to believe that just as he is capable of *emes*, so are others capable of *emes*, each according to their own soul root. The *emes* contained in one Jew’s soul might not be the same *emes* that is in another, but the common denominator between all souls is that just as there can be *emes* contained in one soul, so can there be *emes* contained in another’s soul.

Happiness Requires Connection To Others

The *simchah* (happiness) that is available in the world today is only possible when we connect to others. When one is alone, he is sad, and he cannot have *simchah*. Happiness requires that a person have connection with others. This is a clear and undisputed fact. The only issue is how a person should connect to others. But there must be connection to others, in order for a person to have *simchah*. The deeper the connection to others, the deeper the happiness.

When it comes to marriage, the Torah says that there is a *mitzvah* upon a husband to gladden his wife. It is because connection to another brings *simchah*. A man needs to get married because “*it is not good for man to be alone*” - when a person is alone, he cannot have *simchah*. But when is the *simchah* genuine? It is only if the man realizes that the woman he is marrying was originally “his rib”, and that marriage enables him to find his missing piece. But if he views her as a separate entity who is not really a part of him, he cannot have genuine *simchah* upon getting married.

The Two Functions of Our Da’as

To conclude, we have explained that there are two functions of our *da’as* – there is a part of our *da’as* which separates us from others, where a person remains firm in his own individual way of thinking, and a part of the *da’as* which connects to the *da’as* of others. These two abilities are known as *da’as d’havdalah* (mental separation) and *daas d’chibbur* (mental connection).

Daas d'havdalah is the ability to have your own individual way of thinking, which separates you from others, in your thinking. Every person has a unique *da'as*, so the *da'as* of each person separates him from others. But if a person only makes use of his *daas d'havdalah* and he never develops his ability of *daas d'chibbur*, he will never be happy. And if he goes to the other extreme and he only has *da'as d'chibbur*, he will always agree with other people, but he will never have an opinion of his own. The Sages call this *kalus hadaas*, “light *daas*”.

A person will only be able to be happy when he has the combination of *da'as d'havdalah* and *da'as d'chibbur*. First a person needs to reach his own unique way of thinking, his own *da'as*, and after that, to connect to the ways of thinking of others and to believe that others too have their own *da'as*.

A true *bar daas* (one who is capable of mature, spiritual thinking) realizes that there is a point of truth contained in everything, even in falsity. Even falsity contains a spark of truth, for “falsity has no feet”, it cannot stand on its own, and the only way that falsity can exist and be sustained is because there is some small spark of truth that is contained in it, which allows it to stand.

This was actually the greatness of Avraham Avinu, who was called “*av hamon goyim*,” “father of the nations”. Why is Avraham called the “father of the nations” if he stood against all of the falsity of the nations? Why is Avraham the connecting point between all of the nations? It was because he was able to find the points of truth in every bit of falsity he came across.

Based upon this, we can now understand more about *simchah*, which can only be attained through connection to others. When we were redeemed from Egypt, we were elevated above the nations, and we became exalted above all of their languages. As we explained before, this was reason for *simchah*. But did we become totally separated from all of the languages of the world? This cannot be, because “The Torah can be explained in seventy languages”.

The Proper Balance

Now we can understand a very deep and clear definition of *simchah*.

When someone experiences only his own existence, and he never connects outward to others, he will be sad. When someone connects too much to others and he cannot isolate from them, he has *kalus hadaas* (“lightened *daas*”), and he is experiencing others too much instead of living his own life. But if someone has the proper balance in his soul between a deep solitude with himself and the ability to have connection with others, he lives a life of *simchah*.

Happiness doesn't mean to always connect to others and abandon one's own individuality. Such a person cheapens his own self-value and he will have a spiritual downfall as he connects outward to others, because he has no place in himself to go to. Yet, if a person only lives inwardly and he never lives others, he will become lonely and he will always be sad.

When the Jewish people left Egypt, the Torah says that the “*Erev Rav*” also came up with them. On one hand, we became a nation then, apart from the other nations, “*A nation that dwells alone*”, but at the same time, the wicked souls of the *Erev Rav* joined us at the very inception of our nation, and these *Erev Rav* souls contained the worst influences of all of the nations of the world. The very

redemption was already flawed, because there was evil following us even as we became a nation. This did not allow for a complete *simchah* in our redemption; the fact that we dwelled in solitude as we were in the desert was not enough to be a source of *simchah* to us. *Simchah* is only possible when we can be separated from the rest of the evil influences of the world, and at the same time, to be connected to everyone, without exception. The balance of these two aspects together is what enables complete *simchah*.

Thus, in order to have *simchah*, there are two aspects that must be in place (remember that it is impossible in our current era to have a life of complete *simchah*). *Simchah* can only come from a balance between solitude with one's own inner world, along with being able to connect to others.

On one hand, one needs to be able to have a very deep solitude with his own self, where he can separate from the rest of the world and feel truly alone, as if there is no one else in the world. The *Nefesh HaChaim*¹⁷ describes a perspective where a person can be connected to the state of before Creation, when there was no world yet and no people to be connected to. At the same time, one has to be able to feel a deep connection to everyone in the world.¹⁸

True *simchah* is only possible if one can contain these two opposite aspects in himself. On one hand, a person must feel so alone from others as if there is no one else in the world, but at the same time, he must feel connection to everyone.

This is a very deep *avodah* of “*ratzu v'shov*”, of “advancing and retreating”, between two opposite areas in the soul. *Simchah* comes from being able to connect to these two opposite points together. Then a person has the balance between deep inner solitude and connection to others, which offers the complete happiness one can reach.

The Inner Sources of Happiness and Pleasure

Based upon the above, we can now proceed to understand the following point.

The simple understanding is that the inner layer of the soul is the place of “alone”, whereas the external layers of the soul are used to connect outward to others, and, simply speaking, it is the outward connection to others where *simchah* lies.

But the deeper way to understand it is that when one lives inwardly, even in his inner layer there is *simchah* and no sadness. This is the depth of “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem.*”

If one never connects with others and he only wants to experience the happiness of being close to Hashem, he will not have *simchah*. He will have pleasure from this (*taanug*), but it will not give him *simchah*. By contrast, when one can connect to all others and he can also connect to his inner root where he is alone with Hashem, not only will he have *simchah* in connecting to others, but even in his inner point of “alone” he can have *simchah*. Of this it said, “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem.*”

¹⁷ *Nefesh HaChaim: Shaar III*

¹⁸ The Rav was asked if one should feel a connection to gentiles as well, and the Rav answered, “In our current world, it is very dangerous for a person to feel connection to gentiles. In the future, when the world will be rectified, then it will be possible.”

The deep way of understanding this is because he is not really “alone” there, even in the “alone”. He is rather found in the inner point of “before Creation”, where it is not possible to have loneliness.

In summary, when one connects to all others, this provides him with *simchah* happiness. When one connects to his inner self, to his point of “alone”, this gives him *taanug* pleasure. And when one connects to the point of “before creation” - where there were no people yet and there was only Hashem – therein lays the complete *simchah*. These are the two opposite points which, together, produce complete *simchah* for the soul.

In connecting to others, there is *simchah*, and in connecting to the state of before Creation where there is nothing but Hashem (*Ain Od Milvado*), there is also *simchah*, of which it is said “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem*”. And there is also a “middle point” in between these two points, where one can be “alone” with himself and separate from others. There he can find the pleasure of solitude with his own inner self; but if he wants to attain *simchah*, he won't be able to get it from there.

These are deep words, and I hope that you gain something from it. It has been described here how a person can arrive at complete *simchah* in the soul.