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## Getting to Know Your Simcha - 011 Raising Happy Children

### Giving Over The Mitzvos With Happiness

Since this month is Adar, the month of simcha/happiness, we will focus about one point that can bring us simcha.

When we do mitzvos, we have two commandments within every mitzvah: the mitzvah itself, and the commandment to perform it happily. There is the mitzvah itself, and then there is the way we do it. The way we do a mitzvah is to do it happily.

When something is given over joyously, people want to carry it out joyously. Most of the times when something is given over, it is not received with joy, because the person giving it over didn't give it with happiness.

By the *Simchas Beis Hashoeivah*, there was a great happiness, because the happiness was drawn forth. Happiness has to be drawn forth, just like you draw water from a spring.

What is the purpose of giving over information to others? Is the purpose to give over the information, or is the purpose to give over joy in it? Simply speaking, one will say that in order to give over information, it has to be given over joyously; so the purpose is the information, just it needs to be done in a joyous way.

But on a deeper note, the purpose of giving over the information is really to give over a happiness. "Hashem rejoices in His creations." Happiness comes from completion, while sadness comes from an absence of something. If we want to give over happiness, we need to bring the person to the source of the happiness and draw it out from there. There are people who want to be happy, but they don't know where to get it from; they don't where the source is.

### The Source Of Happiness

Where is the source of happiness?

"The righteous rejoice in Hashem." What is the joy in Hashem? It is when a person lives the right kind of life, a life of connection with Hashem. If a person doesn't live with Hashem, he is just very self-absorbed. He won't be able to be happy completely.

We all want to give happiness to our children. But from where do we find the happiness to give over

to them? The biggest wonder is that parents want their children to be happy and want to give them happiness, but they themselves don't have that joy to give over.

How can a person give over a *simchas hachaim*, a joy for life, if he himself doesn't have a joy for life? When we try to give our children happiness but we ourselves don't have it, the result we can see (from much trial and error) is that the children remain just like the parents, who aren't happy.

But when the parents live with the joy of living a life with Hashem, they have the ability to give over that joy to their children. They become like a wellspring that can give continuously.

When people only know of temporary happiness, such happiness falls apart in the end. Any joy which we get from the outside of us is just superficial; it is temporary and it goes away. But there is an inner kind of joy we can have – and it is real, and it lasts. This is a happiness that comes from a deep, inner point within is.

### **Non-Jewish Therapists Can't Help A Jew**

Every day we thank Hashem that we were not created as a non-Jew. If we say this every day from the depths of our soul, this will fill us with an inner happiness. How does it fill a person with joy?

If we desire to live the real Jewish kind of lifestyle, such a desire will give us that happiness.

There is a very disturbing thing taking place in our times. A Jew who has some problems in his life goes to a non-Jewish therapist for help. But a Jew cannot be helped by a non-Jew! A Jew who needs help is really looking for how he can find the "Jew" inside him. Can a non-Jew help him find that?!

Really, the problem is that he's not happy being a Jew. Since that is the problem, there is no non-Jew who can help him find the solution.

If a person would only desire how he can live more and more like a Jew, he would never fathom going to a non-Jewish therapist.

Why is a person ever not happy?? Can the Jew within you ever die? You are always a Jew, and this is the greatest happiness.

After Adam sinned, he was cursed with *etzev* (sadness). He was told, "Dirt you are, and to dirt you shall return." This shows us that sadness only affects our aspect of dirt in us – our physical layer. But in us there is also a Jew, and the Jew within us doesn't come from earth. When a person lives with the Jew inside himself, he will never be sad!

If a Jew is sad, it must be that it is because he doesn't realize what it means to be a Jew. Non-Jewish therapy is never the solution for a Jew.

### **Wanting To Be A Jew**

What exactly is our joy in our life which we must convey? What happiness do we want to our children?

We want to show our children how happy it is to be a Jew. We want to show them that the more and more of a Jewish kind of lifestyle you live, the happier you will be.

We must know what our life is about. Why should we be happy? What is the difference between a

Jew's happiness and a non-Jew's happiness? A Jew is happy when his soul is revealed. "We will revel and rejoice, in You." When we reveal our souls - when we have nagilah - then we will have v'nismicha boch, "rejoice in You."

We know that we are all Jewish, but how much time do we think about this? It is a superficial attitude to just know you are Jewish and not to search about the meaning of what it means that you are a Jew.

To be a Jew realizes to mean that you are separated from the non-Jews. "And I will separate them from among the nations." Every day we make a beracha, "That you did not make me a non-Jew." Before that we make the beracha that we were woken up - "Who gives the rooster understanding." First, we have the understanding, and upon the real understanding, we can realize how thankful we are that we were not made a non-Jew.

When we make havdalah, we also mention how we are separated from the other nations. The depth of this is because in order to be able to separate between night and day, we must realize how we are different from the non-Jews.

## **The Joy Of Being Jewish**

What is the joy of being Jewish?

There is such a thing as idol worship, even today. It seems that India is where the most idol worship is taking place, but the truth is that there is more idol worship going on in America! In India, they might do actual idol worship, but they don't do it every second. But in America, the whole way of life of many people is like a constant idol worship.

What is idol worship, avodah zarah? Zarah means "strange." When a person acts strange to another person, he is greeted by another person but he doesn't answer him. He acts toward him like a stranger. When a person does something but looks it strangely, it's like avodah zarah, because he considers what he does to be strange.

When a person does mitzvos but he isn't connected to Hashem, this resembles idol worship. Mitzvos to him are strange. When a person puts on tefillin and he thinks that it's strange, it's like idol worship.

When a Jew is connected to Hashem in everything he does, he lives like a Jew. When a Jew does everything he is supposed to do - he learns, davens, and does chessed - it can be that everything he does is like avodah zarah, because he isn't connected to Hashem. Even though he does everything he is supposed to do, he is still sad. Why is he sad? It is because he isn't really serving Hashem, even though he does everything. He is serving idols.

What does it mean to be a Jew? It means to be connected to Hashem in everything. This is the whole secret to happiness. From where can we draw happiness from? It is only when our inside is connected to what we do on our outside, when our heart is connected to our intellect. If you see any smart person who is sad, it must be that his heart isn't connected to his mind. If his heart would be in the right place, he would be happy.

A person can do all the mitzvos, but if he doesn't want it deep down and he'd rather live like a non-Jew deep down - he is sad, even though he does all the mitzvos.

## **Chinuch With The Heart**

Happiness is found in our heart. (This has been proven medically as well, that the mood changes according to how the heart is).

If our heart is in one place and our mind is in another, can we ever be happy? If someone isn't happy, it's a sign that something is wrong with his heart.

A person might teach his child everything in the Torah and tell him it's all true, and the child grows up knowing that he has to learn and do all the mitzvos. But he can know all of it, yet his heart isn't there. We must realize that the main part in all our chinuch of our children is on their hearts.

Anything in our life is rooted in our heart. "For from it comes life." The chinuch we give to our children has more to do with the heart, not the knowledge we give over to them.

The Chofetz Chaim said that there are different levels in Gan Eden for those who are cold, lukewarm, warm or very warm about their Yiddishkeit. When we do chinuch on our children, we shouldn't be satisfied with giving them over lukewarm or even warm feelings about Yiddishkeit. We need to get them to feel very, very warm feelings toward Yiddishkeit.

When we give over values to our children, it must be given with happiness. It is not enough to train them to do all the mitzvos; they need to see it being given over with happiness.

If we are ourselves aren't happy, we cannot give over the Torah to the next generation. You cannot give something you don't have, and if you aren't happy, you won't be able to give happiness to your children.

### **Going "Off the Derech"**

Unfortunately, we see many children that suddenly go off the derech sometime after their bar mitzvah. Until they reached bar mitzvah age, they were learning Torah and doing mitzvos just like every other good boy. Suddenly, the child can throw it all away - in the best situation he won't want to open a Gemara, and at worst, he doesn't want to be frum anymore.

How do we explain this terrible phenomenon? Until now, everything was fine. What happened?

But it's not that the child "went off" the derech. He never was "on the derech" to begin with! If he "went off the derech", all it means is that he was never on the derech to begin with. He felt like he was in a jail all along, and as soon as he felt like he could finally escape, he ran from the "jail".

Although he may have been learning, davening and doing mitzvos - it wasn't a part of him. He was never connected to it in the first place. He knew all about it in his mind, but his heart was never in it.

### **Chinuch Is On Ourselves**

Our job in chinuch is make sure that our children feel connected to Yiddishkeit, to make them feel that what they are doing is a part of them. We need to make sure that their hearts are in it.

Most people know a lot of Torah, but their hearts aren't in it. They have never developed their heart.

Just like when a person has a heart problem he needs to have heart surgery, so can it be said of this generation that many of us need to have "heart" surgery.

If we want our children to be happy with Yiddishkeit, if we want to see real nachas from them, we need to work on ourselves first.

This can only be done if we ourselves are connected to pnimiyus, and only then can we give over the mesorah to the next generation with happiness, and when the children see our happiness in Yiddishkeit, the mitzvos become a part of them when they do it.

Many people are sitting down and trying to analyze the many problems of this generation and what the solution is. Some say that we need to get them to learn more, and others say that we need to give our children more love. But there is really only one answer which defines the root of the problem: we need to fix our very heart.

“And purify our hearts to serve You in truth.” If we say this from our heart to Hashem, and we don’t just say the words, Hashem will answer us.

If a person needs heart surgery, how much money is he willing to pay? If it will cost him \$200,000 -- would he pay it? He would. He’s find a way to come up with the money somehow.

How much are we willing to pay for our real heart? How much are we willing to put into it?

May we all be zoche to connect to Hashem.

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