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The Source For Sadness Is Sin

What is a person's natural mood - to be happy or to be sad?

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 clear: sadness came onto the world as a result of Adam's sin. 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 pain of pregnancy and child labor. Sin caused sadness, and if not for the first sin, it wouldn't be possible to become sad.

We know what causes sadness - sin. But what causes happiness? From where do we get our happiness from?

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

The Two Kinds Of Happiness

There are two kinds of 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.

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, but it is a happiness simply because **that is the way we are created** - *to be able to be happy, without any 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.

Even the *mitzvah* to be happy on Yom Tov is a happiness based on a reason; we celebrate Yom Tov because we were taken out of Egypt. The whole possibility of Yom Tov came into creation as a result of sin as well; any time we need a reason to be happy, it is a result of the curse, and it is not the real happiness.

The real, perfect kind of happiness is an inner kind of happiness. This is the happiness of the *tzaddikim*, who “rejoice in Hashem”.

To be happy because of something is that I need to be happy when I achieve something. This is the external kind of happiness. 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 to not need any reason to be happy. But this inner happiness is very concealed from us and very far from our grasp.

Most people live based on their achievements, which is the lower kind of happiness. Since that is the reality right now, we will focus our discussion on the lower kind of happiness. It is not the ultimate kind of happiness, as we said; but it is still a kind of happiness nonetheless, and thus let us try to learn how to achieve it, so that we can have some degree of happiness.

Why Most People Aren’t Happy

Most people are not always happy, and it is because they need to see results in order to be happy.

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 so happy go lucky that everything makes him happy?! That isn’t the reason for his response. It is simply that he isn’t aware 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 in this world is to be **aware that when you are performing a mitzvah** it will lead to your happiness. If you're 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 of 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 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.

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 For This

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 say (*Megillah* 6b) 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 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 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.

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