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## Getting to Know Your Simcha - 013\_ Experiencing Your 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.

Let us bring out the point more.

### ***Experiencing Your Efforts Brings Your Happiness***

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 *tahalich* you took toward happiness?

To illustrate, a child reads something and only sees what's written on the paper; he doesn't see the *tahalich* 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 *tahalich* of something.

Most people are only looking to be happy with something tangible, but they don't see the *tahalich*. 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 *tahalich* to get to their happiness, they aren't really happy even when they finally get what they wanted.

### ***Examples Of Seeing The "Tahalich"***

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 *tahalich* 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 *simcha* (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 *tahalich*, the husband is of course very frustrated at his wife's opposition to him. If he would see how this struggle is really a *tahalich*, 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 *tahalich*, 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 *tahalich* and we

will never really be happy. If we don't want anyone to oppose us, we aren't happy with the *tahalich*; 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 *tahalich* 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 *tahalich*. 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 happiness – 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 *tahalich* – 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 *tahalich*, 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 *tahalich*; 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 *taavoh*, 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 *tahalich* 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 *tahalich*. 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.”<sup>[1]</sup> 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.

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.

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<sup>[1]</sup> A statement of the Baal Shem Tov – “*oichez b'miktzaso, oichez b'kulo*”.