



From the desk of
MORDECHAI MALKA
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel
Founder and President of Or Hamelech Institutions
Member of Chief Rabbinate of Israel



1

Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Ki Tavo

HAMELECH

Be Happy

So many difficulties are bound to strike. Why? Because you did not serve Hashem with joy. Life is full of ups and downs. Most people do not seem to be happy. As much as they have, they want more, and it gives them no rest.

What gives joy? Genuine people know how to derive joy even from the "little" things in life. Happiness is the lot, not of those who get what they want, but who want what they get!

Simcha is great! Whoever is not happy with Avodat Hashem earns a harsh punishment.

Rambam (Lulav 8:15) teaches that joy which accompanies the performance of a mitzvah is a great service. One who omits it deserves to be punished!

Maggid Mishna adds: Don't do *mitzvot* just because you have to. Do them because you want to.

Rambam Teshuva (9:1) teaches that doing *mitzvot* joyously earns a person freedom from disturbances and inconveniences. Hashem will give him all that he needs in order to do more and more *mitzvot*.

When a person does *mitzvot* with joy, he is rewarded even in this world. It could help him achieve Ruach HaKodesh. Do not view *mitzvot* as unwanted burdens. When you come to do a *mitzvah*, imagine that you just discovered a treasure chest full of gold coins.

Someone once asked Rav Shteinman what resolution ought a young Bar Mitzvah *bochur* take upon himself. Rav Shteinman suggested: Have him not remove his tefillin until after the final *kaddish*. This way, he will value every moment of wearing tefillin.

Are You Looking for Excuses?

Earlier generations were deemed more righteous because they sought methods to obligate themselves in *mitzvot*. Later generations looked for excuses and legal loopholes.

Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz says that some people really miss the boat. They dread *mitzvah* observance and are gleeful at every exemption.

We should think about how even high-ranking officers are overjoyed at the privilege to serve the king.

It should be our greatest joy. What does Hashem ask of us? *Mitzvot* are often simple endeavors, such as tooting a horn or picnicking outside in a hut. The Gemara calls *sukkah* an easy *mitzvah*. Someone who is *mitzta'er* – in pain – is exempt. *Mitzvot* were not meant to be grueling.

In the Haftorah for Parashat Balak, the prophet Micah calls out (on Hashem's behalf), "My Nation, what have I done to you and how have I fatigued you? Answer me regarding this!"

Arizal says that the pains of *galut* are in response to this that we do not do *mitzvot* happily. People are so careful that their clothing should be appealing and orderly. Do they give the same attention to their *tefillin* and other mitzvah items?



From the desk of
MORDECHAI MALKA
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel
Founder and President of Or Hamelech Institutions
Member of Chief Rabbinate of Israel



Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

Special Home

Rabbi Avrohom, brother of the Vilna Gaon, lived in the town of Kaiden. He was offered a lucrative position in Vilna, but his Rabbanit refused. Why? Because in Kaiden was their former home which they had sold so that they could have money for a mitzvah purpose. Several times a day, the Rabbanit passed by that place and became filled with joy as she reminded herself of their "sacrifice" for Torah and *mitzvot*. That is why she could not imagine moving out to a different city.

The Gaon and the Etrog

The story is told of the Gaon of Vilna and the *etrog*. Each year, messengers went to locate and purchase a nice *etrog* for the Gaon. One time, the *etrog* dealer said, "I will only sell you this *etrog* on condition that I receive the Olam Habah which is earned by this mitzvah.

The messengers knew that the Gaon needed an *etrog* so they agreed to the terms. When they came and told the Gr"a, expecting his countenance to take a change for the worse, they were in for a surprise! The Gaon was overjoyed! Now he could do this *mitzvah* totally *lishmah* because Hashem said so, without any incentive.

It's Adar, Be Happy

A man we'll call Baruch was overwhelmed with difficulty. His son was ill and he lost his job. Along came the month of Adar and he knew that he was supposed to be happy, but how?

His rav told him that in the days of Mordechai and Esther, things looked bleak but in the blink-

of-an-eye, everything turned around – *venahafoch hu*. This realization can provide inspiration in every generation. That is the *simchah* of Chodesh Adar – the realization that Hashem is always in control, we have no say in the matter besides for prayer and *Gam zu letovah*.

Once Baruch heard this, he came home upbeat and shared that lesson with his family members. They took it to heart and Baruch's son soon recovered. Additionally, before long, Baruch got a new job which paid better than the previous one.

Our Sages on Joyous Prayer

Hashem's Divine Presence presides upon the joyous. (Shabbat 30b) The Arizal told R' Chayim Vital that he merited to grasp deep secrets of Torah in response to his joy at performing a *mitzvah*.

In Taanit 22a, we find two brothers who were identified as Bnei Olam Habah due to their happiness and making others happy.

David Hamelech writes (Tehillim 100:2): Serve Hashem with joy. Approach Him with song.

How do we serve Hashem? Tefillah (Medrash Tehillim). Do not daven lazily. Daven with a *simcha shel mitzvah*. (Shulchan Aruch 93)

R' Chaim Vital writes: It is forbidden to pray whilst sad! The soul will not receive spiritual illumination unless one prays with joy. This is crucial and priceless.

Mesilat Yesharim writes: When you stand before Hashem in prayer, allow your heart to become infused with glee, for you are praying to an



From the desk of
MORDECHAI MALKA
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel
Founder and President of Or Hamelech Institutions
Member of Chief Rabbinate of Israel



Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

Almighty who is unparalleled. This is the ultimate joy! A person ought to be ecstatic that he is granted the privilege to pray to an unparalleled Almighty, and to be involved in His Torah and His mitzvot. These endeavors are what brings a person to his perfection. They are eternal possessions.

If Only...

Medrash Rut teaches: Had Reuven known that HaKadosh Baruch Hu would write about him, "And Reuven heard and he saved him (Yosef) from their (the brothers') hands," then he would have carried him to his father on his shoulder!

And had Aharon known that HaKadosh Baruch Hu would write about him, "And he will see you and he will be wholeheartedly glad for you," then he would have gone to greet him (Moshe) with drums and dancing.

And had Boaz known that HaKadosh Baruch Hu would write of him, "And she ate, and she was satiated, and she left over," he (Boaz) would have fed her (Rut) fatty calves.

All of this shows how we are to exert effort to do mitzvos in their ultimate fashion, happily.

A Doctor's Prescription

What can a person do to get happy about mitzvot?

First of all, realize that getting upset or depressed never accomplishes anything. Sadness does not solve problems.

The Sultan asked the Rambam if he has a cure for his worries and fears which cause many an illness.

Rambam responded: Most illnesses are due to worries, anger and agony. These traits cause much pain to people.

The cure is: simchah!

How do you get happy? Not by getting all you want, but by wanting all you get.

Additionally, a person must appreciate difficulties just like he appreciates benefits. In our limited vision, it is hard to know what is really good or bad for us.

The Lost Horse

There was once a man who was on his way to the dock to set out on a sea voyage. On the way, he got a thorn stuck to his foot and he could not set sail. At first he was quite upset. But when he heard that the boat sunk, he was appreciative.

In a similar vein, there was a villager who had a horse and a son. One day, the horse ran away. The villagers's friends came to console him for his loss. Next day, the horse returned with a number of young horses. The villager was delighted. But then, one of the new horses kicked the man's boy. Sounds bad, no?

But guess what? Conscription officials came and drafted people for the enemy. They had no need for the boy with broken leg!

We see from here that with our limited vision, we cannot truly discern what is good or not. So we may as well always assume that all that Hashem does is for the best!

Shabbat Shalom!
Mordechai Malka