



Infected Joy

The last words that we merited to hear from the Lubavitcher Rebbe were “with an abundance of song and chorus.” Even when the Rebbe himself was in serious condition, he instructed his followers to be happy and lift up their voices in song, so that through their joy, all the harsh judgements would be nullified and sweetened and the Mashiach would come.

Generally, we are expected to first “practice what we preach.” In our case, this would be to feel happiness ourselves and only then to make others happy. Even the word Mashiach (משיח) is an anagram for *yismach* (he will be happy) himself and then, *y’sameach* (he will make others happy).

Sometimes, however, it is very difficult to feel happy. If that is the case, we can begin by making others happy – until we, ourselves, are infected by their joy. The sages teach that the person who is a catalyst for a particular good deed is greater than the person actually performing the deed. In the same vein, the person who makes others happy is greater than the person who is happy. And when the joy of the happy person returns to the person who made him happy, his joy greatly increases and he becomes a conduit for more joy.

Making others happy is an act of ‘direct light,’ while the joy that reflects back from the happy person to the person who made him happy is ‘returning light,’ which has an advantage over direct light. The joy returns to the catalyst of the joy so that he will be able to bring joy to others – in a never-ending cycle of joy and giving.

When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get...Happy!

“A person must bless bad tidings like he blesses good tidings.” (*Berachot* 60b.) We are supposed to accept bad news with joy. How can we do that?

Joy is the inner dimension of the sefirah of Understanding. One of the names for this *sefirah* is “The World to Come.” In this world, we do not clearly see God’s hand. We do not know why things happen. But a person who merits to understand something through his proper perception of the circumstances that brought it about, can see the World to Come in this world.

In the World to Come, it is clear that even punishments necessary to cleanse the soul are strictly for the soul's good – similar to a parent or teacher who lovingly give a child a punishment that is clearly just, well-deserved and for the child's future happiness.

When we believe that all that God does is for the good, we can accept everything with joy and thank Him for all that transpires. This experience is a taste of the World to Come. Ultimately, it transforms our troubles and hardships into revealed good in this world.

Accept everything with joy – and start living in the World to Come.