



חודש אדר

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## Habits of Happiness

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## Part I. World of Happiness

### Double the Fun

Tonight is Rosh Chodesh Adar and so, naturally, our subject is **משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה**. Now, when our Sages (Taanis 29a) told us this *halachah* that 'when Adar comes in we're expected to increase our happiness' it's not intended merely as good advice. It's that too of course, but it's more than that. It means that there's an *obligation* upon us during this month to find ways and means of adding joy to our lives; for thirty days we're expected to practice up on the *habit* of happiness.

Not merely for this month alone. Yes, **דבר בעתו**, **מה טוב**, but the idea is to *train* ourselves in the ways of happiness, to become so *habituated* to patterns of thought that increase happiness, that we'll become happy people all year long. And so when, like this year, there are two Adars it's even better. A habit that we can practice for two months will have much more of an effect.

### Good Habits

Now, I use the word 'habit' intentionally and I have to explain that. Because you might say, 'Well, a habit of happiness, after a while it becomes mundane, boring.' Like a man once said to me: 'How can you *daven* with *kavanah* every day? After a while you get accustomed to the words and you start *davening* without *kavanah*. It becomes a bad habit.'

I told him it's not so. 'Just the opposite,' I said. 'Keep on trying to *daven* with *kavanah* every day and after a while it becomes a good habit; you get into the habit of *davening* with *kavanah*, of feeling that you're talking to your Creator.' It's true that *hergel*, habit, can be used *chalilah* for great harm. If a person gets into the habit of doing good things or saying good things, like in *davenen*, without thinking what he's doing, it's a tragedy. If three times a day he's mumbling words without thinking so he's practicing destroying his personality. He's ruining himself with bad habits. But like all gifts from Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the gift of habit can be

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used for great benefit too. You can get into the habit of enjoying the *davenen*; every word becomes sweet, every word a treasure.

### **Happy Habits**

And the habit of *simcha* is the same; if a person practices *ignoring* all the happiness of this world so he becomes a person of habit – the habit of sadness, of gloominess. You meet people like that. Old grouches. They practiced up all their lives and now they're habituated belly-achers – nothing is good, everything is bad. There's nothing to be happy about. But when it's practiced properly – you have to go to the right places and learn the right ideas – then you develop a habit of happiness; you become habituated in *simcha*, in finding happiness in things that go unnoticed by others.

That's what it means to be *marbeh besimcha*. You can't just order *simcha* from the Kedem Wine Factory. *Marbim* means you have to do something to increase the dose, to develop the habit of looking at the world through rosy glasses. I say rosy glasses – the truth is you don't need rosy glasses; creation is good without any tints. It's very good!

And don't think it's just an idea, a *ra'ayon* that I'm trying to sell you. It's one of the *yesodos* of the Torah. Hakadosh Baruch Hu expects us to see that the world He gave us is a good world. וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה טוֹב מְאֹד – Hashem saw that it's a very good world (Bereishis 1:31). Why did He tell us that? Of course it's good – He made it. The answer is He wants us to know it. We should say it's a very good world. It means we should be happy people. And so you see that all the way from the beginning, that's one of the primary purposes of creation, to acquire the habit of happiness.

### **Garden of Pleasure**

You know when Adam and Chava were created they didn't have any habits. They had excellent minds; fresh, innocent, pure minds. They had perfect *seichel* but they had no habits. All animals have instincts. As soon as they're born they have built-in habits of what to do, how to react. Human

beings however were created without habits, a clean slate, ready to be written on. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu did something that showed that there is a certain habit He wanted them to get right away. What did He do? He put them in Gan Eden, a Garden of Enjoyment. *Eden* means the pleasure of *this* world; all kinds of delicious fruits.

And it's not an accident; it's made for that purpose. Don't you see that when an apple grows on the tree, it doesn't become worse and worse as it ripens. It becomes better and better. So you see it's so! The purpose is you should enjoy it! No question about it. Hashem is interested in making this a world of happiness, of enjoyment.

### **Enjoying the Garden**

Now, I know you *tzaddikim* don't believe in enjoying things but listen to me. Hakadosh Baruch Hu put them in a Gan Eden because He wanted them to learn the habit of enjoying things; He wanted them to get in the habit of saying "Oh, Ribono Shel Olam! How good this is and how good that is!"

Of course once they say that, they'll say 'Thank You, Hashem.' When Adam and Chava would take a delicious fruit off a tree in that garden, they'd enjoy it to no end and they'd thank Hashem. Once you enjoy, you're reminded of the One giving you all of this happiness.

And therefore we see that the plan of Hashem was at the very beginning to train Adam and Chava in being *marbeh besimcha* by learning the habit of enjoying Olam Hazeh. And it was such an important principle, that He put them into Gan Eden. Otherwise He could have put them in a place that's not Gan Eden; He could have made for them a place with all kinds of interesting things. A *Gan Chochma*, a Garden of Wisdom, where they could see wonderful things in nature, all types of *niflaos haBorei* that would show them the *chochmas Hashem* in the world. No, He didn't do that. He put them in a Gan Eden, a place of *enjoyment*, because

He wanted them to learn how to be happy in this world.

And now they were ready for the great career of life, the career of enjoying this world. Because the greatest *hatzlacha* in *Olam Haze*h is 'טוב לְהוֹדוֹת' לָהּ. The best of all things is to learn how to say thank you to Hashem. That's the highest form of *avodas Hashem*, to serve Him with gratitude.

### **His Happy Handiwork**

What are you grateful for? What are you thanking Him for? בִּי שִׂמְחָתְךָ ה' בְּפַעֲלֶךָ – You made me happy with Your work (Tehillim 92:5). Dovid said, "I look around at Your world and I say thank You Hashem for such a world. בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יְרִידְךָ אֲרַנֵּן – I sing at the works of Your Hands (ibid.).

It means *all* the 'work of Your Hands'. Everything in the world is made for happiness. The sun is a happiness. The clouds are a happiness. The rain is happiness. The fact that you can swallow; swallowing is happiness! A heartbeat is happiness. The ocean is for happiness. It's full of good things to eat. Hundreds of thousands of tons of fish are taken out of the ocean every day.

The soil is for happiness! Every tablespoon of soil has more living things inside of it, bacteria and fungi, more than people in Greater New York. Every tablespoon full of soil! And it's intended to make you happy. Soil causes all good things to grow.

That was the intention of the *briah*, that we should enjoy all the details of life and thus sing to Hashem; and sing more and more and more and more until it becomes a habit to sing all your life. And if that's the purpose of life then we have to understand how important, how essential, how urgent it is to cause ourselves to be happy!

Because without *simcha* we're not going to do this big job that's waiting for us; that's לְמַעַן יִזְמְרוּ – כָּבוֹד וְלֹא יֵדִים ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָאָדָם – to sing to and praise Hashem always and forever (ibid. 32:13). And in order to do that, you know, you have to have a happy personality.

### **The Biology of Happiness**

Not only for thanking; if you want to make progress in *avodas Hashem*, progress in *davening* or progress in good character and *middos tovos*, progress in *emunah*, progress in *mitzvos*, a man must have certain ingredients and one of the most important ingredients is *simcha*. You must gain the habit of happiness in your daily regimen, otherwise you cannot succeed. That's why there's such a big emphasis in the Torah on happiness. That's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires that we should be not only Orthodox Jews, not only *frum* Jews, but happy Jews.

I can prove it scientifically. It's easy to prove scientifically, from biology, that our Creator wants us to be happy because the body functions better when we're happy. The Creator made the body and He made it so that a person lives a healthier life, a longer life, when He's happy.

You know we have in our body glands that give forth secretions, hormones, that help control very many functions in the body. You have the pituitary gland. You have the thyroid gland. The parathyroid, the adrenals, the pancreas, other glands; and they give forth secretions and hormones.

Now, these secretions are tremendously complicated and the scientists have spent lifetimes in the laboratories studying their secrets. And it's been discovered that when a person is disturbed, when he's angry or jealous or worried, when he's unhappy, something happens to these secretions and they don't come out right. And when somebody is happy, when he's in a good mood, certain chemical reactions take place that make the secretions come out exactly right. It's a well known fact.

### **It's Old News By Us**

Now you're hearing something not what I said. It's not said by *tzaddikim*. It's said by the scientists. In order for your body to function most efficiently, it's important to be in a good mood, a mood of happiness. But we understand that the scientists are only discovering the plan of Hashem, that He



wants happy people. They're finally figuring out what we knew all along; that *עולם הקסר יבנה*, that the entire *briah*, your own body included, is made for the purpose of seeing the good of the world!

And so *משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה* means not only that we should be happy when we see Haman hanging; that we'll be delirious with happiness when the time comes and we see all of our enemies hanging. It's that too but it's much much more than that. *Marbin besimcha* means we have to start changing our attitude and understand that it's the *ratzon Hashem* that we should try to gain this *middah* of *sameach*, the habit of happiness, all year long.

## Part II. Drawing Forth Happiness

### **Acquiring Good Habits**

Now, when we understand how heavy is this obligation to gain for ourselves the optimum physical happiness, we must study how we do this. How do we acquire this habit of *simcha*?

The answer is it's inside us. Just like the chemical reactions of the organs of the body are made-to-order for happiness, the *neshama* of a person too is created for happiness. Because it's the will of Hashem that we should have the potential for never-ending happiness, He made therefore a well, a fountain, of happiness inside us. It's a reservoir that is connected by a pipe to an endless source of happiness, to the world where the *neshama* came from. How deep is the well I cannot tell you because it's bottomless. But what I can tell you is that once you begin to unplug the well you'll cause the waters to gush forth.

Now that's a very big *yediah*; people would be very much interested in knowing this information because everybody – at least that's what they claim – seeks happiness. And they would go big distances to find it. We see they *do* go; they imagine happiness is in some far off place, some expensive place, and they go there looking. But if they would know that

happiness is stored up like an atomic energy pile within themselves and they are capable of generating as much happiness as they want – if they would know that information it would be one of the most important lessons that they could gain: that *it's within you to become happy!* And therefore *משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה* means only that you have to get busy pumping it out from within.

### **Lowering the Bucket**

You know, if you have a well in your front yard, a water-well, it won't help you at all if you're not going to approach the well and make some effort to draw forth the water. You have to find a bucket and get to work. Same thing with the happiness-well that's inside of you – you have to lean over into the well and begin drawing forth buckets of happiness. How so? By means of thinking; by means of the mind.

Now, I'm not saying you can't enjoy a *nosh* once in a while in Adar to help get into the mood; sometimes you need some ice-cream to help prime the pump. *Nosh* helps out a little bit – it's encouragement to stimulate your happiness emotions – but the most important bucket you'll need is your mind.

Once you learn how to think, what to think, so you'll start exciting that source of pleasure, the source of happiness, within you and you'll be amazed that after a while it becomes a gusher, a fountain of joy just from yourself. You become a gusher that brings forth new attitudes and emotions of happiness – even *chiddushim*; *chiddushim* in happiness! – every day.

So let's get down to business, to the business of the habit of happiness. The first thing you have to know is that the happiness of life is many things. The joy of life is not one thing; there are thousands and thousands of details of happiness. Life is a combination, a sum total of tens of thousands of phenomena, and each one is a bucket in itself.

And therefore it's necessary to take each phenomenon separately and study it on its own;

the result of your study will be that when you encounter that phenomenon it causes you happiness.

### **The Sugya of Zyphers**

So suppose you study the wind; let's say a man learns to enjoy the wind. You'll find happiness whenever you go outside. It may seem silly but that's because you didn't study it. The wind is a subject that can make you endlessly grateful and very happy. There's a lot of fun in the wind if you'll study it.

The Gemara tells in Mesichta Gittin (31b) that a *chacham* was walking and he saw two sages seated and talking so he said **בְּמַאי עֲסָקִיתוּ** – *What sugya are you talking about?* So they said **בְּרוּחוֹת** – “We’re talking about winds.” Two sages of the Talmud were seated and talking about winds, about the benefits and pleasures of wind.

Why don't we sit down sometimes and talk about winds? Nobody wants to listen? So talk to yourself. If the winds finally are discussed and studied properly so the next time there will be a zephyr or a breeze or a gust, whatever it is, it's going to cause us happiness!

Now it doesn't mean we'll go wild with *simcha*; after all, it's only one of many phenomena. But it will make you happy! And winds are blowing all the time and they don't cost much money either. So a person is walking in the street and a breeze is tickling him and it arouses in his mind all those pleasurable thoughts that he prepared in his thoughts. And that way winds become one contribution to a career of happiness.

### **Breathing In Happiness**

Now suppose that person also learned how to enjoy breathing. Breathing is fun. I once told you about a simple experiment, didn't I? Fill up your sink with water and dip your head; hold it there for thirty seconds and finally you take it out: “Ahh!” That first breath of air. Isn't it delicious! And the

truth is it's *always* delicious; only sometimes you need to be reminded.

So practice it. Sometimes you're a little depressed, open the window and breathe deeply for a little while. It will change you. When you breathe air, it freshens you. That's what it's for; it's made for our happiness.

Now, once you start practicing you'll be amazed how much happiness you have in your heart just because of your breathing. When you walk outside and breathe the air, even cold air, it's a happiness. It's good, clean air, and the cold helps clean the air; it makes it free of germs. When you breathe it in, you're so happy. It comes into your lungs and it invigorates you; it makes your blood become more red and you're so happy. And so, **מְשֻׁנְנֵנִי אֲדָר מְרַבֵּן**, **בְּשִׂמְחָה**, means, “I'm so happy I'm breathing!”

Now, I understand that it doesn't even enter your mind. Make a tally, see how many people think about that? I'm talking about *frum* Jews. The *beheimos* outside, I'm not talking about them. But the *frum* Jews, how many are thinking about enjoying the gift of air and thanking Hashem for that? I'm very sorry to say, not many and that's a condemnation, an accusation against us.

Don't think it's an exaggeration. Don't think I'm making a big fuss over nothing here. I'm telling you the A-B-C's of being a Jew. You have to thank Hashem for air, for the fun of breathing.

### **The Sunny Disposition**

Now suppose in addition to that he has the joy of sunlight too. Sunlight! It warms you up. It's free energy. Con Ed won't send you a bill for daytime light or for the heat. The sun gives you the ability to see. It gives you vitamins too. The sun is fun. When a person practices walking on the sunny side of the street, he'll be walking on the sunny side of life.

Why should you wait until the day comes when you're 119 years old and you're lying in a home for old men looking through the window and you know that you have only one or two days left; you're

looking out on the street and thinking, “How beautiful is the light of day. I never realized that light was such a good thing.”

Light means I can see this fun world. Light means I have blue skies. It means I have trees with beautiful foliage. I have rose bunches galore as I walk down the street. Everything I have.

You walk out on Ocean Parkway, and it's a beautiful street. It's a parkway; there are trees and bushes and after today's rain they're exuding a fragrance too. And the combined fragrance of different kinds of shrubs and trees combined with the city odors – it's a pleasure the city odors – they combine to give a certain cocktail. Not the kind you drink; no. You draw it deep into your lungs and enjoy it. Learn to enjoy it! It takes some time but you can make it a habit of yours.

Water also makes us happy. You have all the good water you want to drink. Flatbush water, tap water, is a pleasure! And it's almost free! Learn to enjoy it. I don't care what you say; it's fun! A glass of water when you're thirsty is a *taanug*! No question, it's a real pleasure!

### **More and More Pleasure**

Sleep! Sleep is a happiness. While you're sleeping, all the organs in the body are being refreshed and you wake up a new man. And a pillow too? Ooh ah! It's a joy to sleep well, to sleep soundly. You young people don't appreciate it. Someday you might have to look back and say, “The good old days when I slept so *geshmak*.” Sleeping is a pleasure and it was planned that way for the purpose of happiness. So make use of it! Enjoy your sleeping! Get up in the morning and say, “Ah! I slept a sweet sleep last night.” Thank Hashem for it!

Whatever you do, try to enjoy it. Even after you're done, look back and enjoy what you already experienced. When you finish a meal, look back and enjoy what you have eaten. “Ah! That was a good piece of bread!” “Ooh, that fish was *geshmak*!” Whatever it was you ate try to re-experience the pleasure and thank Hashem for that experience.

Now, I really shouldn't stop this talk. We should sit here and talk together all night long. And then we'll continue all day long because there's no end. Everything in the world was created to increase your happiness; all of nature is planned to stimulate *simcha*. Even looking at a tree causes *simcha* naturally. It's only our stubbornness, our contrariness, that makes us unaware. And therefore it's our job to learn to respond naturally to all of these stimuli. The secret is that happiness is not one thing; it's ten thousand things.

### **Roofs and Plumbing in Adar**

Happiness is having a roof over your head. A roof over your head! Ahh! What happiness that is! It takes some practice to appreciate a roof properly but you must do it. You walk into your apartment at night and you remind yourself, “Ahh, it's warm inside. I'm so happy that I'm not sleeping somewhere on a park bench tonight. This is happiness!”

You have a bathroom too? Ahh, you're overloaded with good times. When I was in Europe nobody had a bathroom. When you went to the toilet in the wintertime, in the middle of the night, you had to put on your boots. I stamped through the snow at nighttime with heavy boots to go to the bathroom. You think the bathroom had a seat? No! You crouched over a hole. In the summertime, when you came out, you had to wait about an hour before the odor would go out of your clothing. Trust me you should be happy with a bathroom. Be happy with running water. Hot water! Cold water! Or you can turn on both faucets and make a cocktail, just the right amount.

### **Bursting With Happiness**

Now the more you learn how to be happy from all these things, little by little it grows upon your mind an attitude of optimism. You study all these phenomena one after the other and the sum total adds up to happiness in life. If you studied and practiced two things, so two things cause you happiness. If you learned fifty things, so fifty things will cause you happiness. The more subjects you



study, the more phenomena you learn to enjoy, the more happiness you're going to get out of life. Like Dovid said: *בְּפִעֲלֶךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ אֲרִינָּה* – *I find happiness in all the functions You created, in the deeds of Your Hands* (Tehillim 92:5).

And as life progresses, we're always adding on to our store of happiness as well as reviewing the old ones more deeply. Every day we're *marbin besimcha*; like it says *בְּשִׁעֲרוֹ מִיּוֹם אֶל יוֹם יְשׁוּעָתוֹ*. And after a while life on all sides is bursting out with song. On all sides! And you become a happy personality. That's a tremendous achievement, a very big mitzvah, to gain a happy personality.

## *Part III. Stimulating Happiness*

### **The Shield**

Everyone knows that in the beginning of the Shemoneh Esrei we say are praising Hashem and we say that He is our *מֶלֶךְ עֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמִגֹּן* – *Our King, Who helps us and saves us and shields us*. Now, Ozer means He helps us do things; from the word *oz*, Ozer means He gives us strength to do things. Moshia means He comes with us and He aids us in carrying out things. When we cry out to Him, He listens.

And what is *מִגֹּן*? Magen means 'He goes ahead of us like a shield and He protects us,' and that's the word I want to talk about. What does that mean exactly? In what way is He our shield?

### **Hidden Miracles**

Now in Mesichta Niddah (31a) the Gemara says as follows: *אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר מֵאֵי דְבִתְּרִיב* – Rabbi Elazar asks, "What does it mean this *possuk*, *עוֹשֶׂה נִפְלְאוֹת*, *לְבַדּוֹ* – 'Hashem does wonders all by Himself'" (Tehillim 72:18). Rabbi Elazar wants to know, 'What is it saying 'He does wonders by Himself'? What does it mean 'by Himself'?

So Rabbi Elazar explains that miracles are being done to us all the time that only Hakadosh Baruch Himself is aware of. *אִפְלוּ בְּעַל הַנֶּסֶם אֵינוֹ מְכִיר*

*בְּנִסּוֹ* – *Even the person to whom the miracle is being done doesn't recognize the miracle that he is enjoying.*

You hear that? There are miracles without end happening to us that we're not aware of. And therefore we're not enjoying them. If you don't know that you're being saved from trouble you can't enjoy that miracle and you're losing out on a big dose of happiness.

### **The Unoppressed Oppressed**

Every day we say as follows: *עוֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט לְעֹשׂוּקִים* – *Hakadosh Baruch Hu does justice for those who are oppressed* (Tehillim 146:7).

Now the question is, is that really so? Does Hashem do justice to all those who are oppressed? Don't we see people who are oppressed and justice is not done to them? So what does it mean? Just the plain *teitch*, what does it mean that Hashem saves those who are oppressed?

But the explanation is entirely different. What he's saying is this: Every one of us is being oppressed. Each one of us is being bullied by tyrants and bad neighbors and loan sharks and mobsters. It's only because Hakadosh Baruch Hu steps in and stops it that we don't know about it.

### **Saved From the Mob**

You know, some people have gangsters waiting for them. They made a mistake; they needed money and they couldn't get it quick enough so they went to a loan shark, a gangster company, where the interest is 100% interest. And they can't pay back.

A man, an ex-yeshivah boy who went to the Mesivta by us, called me up at 12 o'clock one night. He says, "Rabbi Miller, what should I do?" He can't go home, he tells me. He made the mistake of borrowing big money and he can't pay back and now there's a gangster waiting for him at his house. What could I do? He wanted money from me. I couldn't fork over to him a few thousand dollars at 12 o'clock at night. Even 12 o'clock in the afternoon I couldn't. So I left him hanging. He was somewhere in Manhattan in a telephone booth. He couldn't go

home. The anguish this man was experiencing! I couldn't help him.

There are a lot of people like that being bullied right now. There are gangsters who have their names and telephone numbers and are trying to pressure them for money. A lot of people are suffering from wicked men, wicked neighbors and wicked bosses and wicked politicians and mobsters and landlords and loan sharks.

### **It's Him, Not You**

Why aren't we? Don't think it has anything to do with you. Much bigger and smarter people than you are suffering. The answer is because Hashem is עוֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט לְעֹשׂוּקִים – Hakadosh Baruch Hu is doing justice for those who otherwise would have been oppressed. The *possuk* is talking about us! We are the ones whom He saved; we were spared. And it's important to find happiness in that.

It means, look around you. If you hear of somebody who was oppressed – he was knocked over in the street by four bums for nothing and they trampled on him and broke his ribs and left him for dead – you have to remind yourself that it could have happened *chalilah* to you. All you need is the right juncture, to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. You're walking on a side street and four bums come and they push against you; and sometimes you make an ejaculation of annoyance and you're done – they're on you.

It's Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who has seen to it beforehand that you don't walk on that street where they are. Or maybe He put the four bums in some back alley someplace else and they're too drunk to come out to the front where you are. And that's why you're here tonight.

We have to understand and keep in mind always, every day, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is protecting us right now. And it's an actual happiness for the thinking person when he becomes aware that miracles are being done for him. He's begins to feel in his heart that he's a lucky fellow. And he is! And he becomes more and more happy just because

of that; just because Hashem is עוֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט לְעֹשׂוּקִים. The *possuk* is talking about him!

### **Which Fallers?**

Same thing when we say every day in Ashrei: סוֹמֵךְ ה' לְכָל הַנִּפְלִים – Hashem supports all the fallers. Because we don't understand that. Don't we see people who fall? Every day people fall. So who is it talking about? Which fallers?

The answer is it's talking about all of us who are standing. We should be falling all the time; to stand erect is hard work. The fact is it's a strain on your heart to stand up straight. You know that when a man is standing and a bullet hits him in the brain, does he die standing up? Why does he fall down? Nobody dies standing because standing is an effort. You have to work hard; your brain has to cooperate with your muscles and your nerves to keep you standing. So the fact that you're not falling down right now is the result of Hakadosh Baruch Hu's Providence.

Or if you didn't fall down at work; you made enough sales this month to keep your boss off your back. Or your stocks didn't fall down like they could have. Or you didn't fall into debt this month. You didn't fall into a manhole that Con Edison is digging. You're still standing? That's only because the סוֹמֵךְ ה' is watching over you that you shouldn't fall. You don't know how many miracles He's doing for you.

### **Straightened and Healed**

And זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים too. If you're not bent over, if your spine is not curved, if you can stand up straight and look people into the face instead of looking on the ground, it's because זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים – Hashem is straightening you out. And if you're not right now in the cancer ward in Sloan Kettering or the ICU hooked up to oxygen, it's not your own strength that was עָשָׂה אֶת הַחֵיל הַזֶּה. It's because Hashem is רופא חולים.

And therefore the fact that you are here and you are in good condition means that you have



avoided very many things that have happened to other people; and that's going to cause you – if you think about it – endless joy!

### **The Joy of Awareness**

Now, it's true that it takes a little effort but it pays. It will pay you back many times over because it stimulates you to bring forth an emotion of happiness that would otherwise never gush forth. And the more you think into it the more and more you'll open up the fountain of *simcha* and it will start gushing; and forever you're going to be happy with the mere fact that these things didn't happen to you! You'll actually be filled with joy.

So you might say what kind of joy is that? Things that *didn't* happen?! Joy is from eating an ice cream cone. Joy is chocolate cake. Joy is if I would find \$100 in the street.

But that's nothing! That's baby-talk, baby happiness. Let's say you find \$100 in the street. If *chas veshalom* after that you get a pain in a certain place and you go to a doctor and he tells you *chalilah* bad news, the \$100 will be swallowed up like nobody's business. It will cost \$100 a day. Money means nothing compared to good health.

### **So Much Happiness**

And so the biggest fun is the fun of being well. And the one who trained himself in the habit of happiness understands that. He's walking down the avenue – could be he just lost his job and he doesn't have a dime in his pocket and his wife just gave him a tongue-lashing – but he's walking on the clouds! He's a very happy man because his liver is functioning. Who knows how much trouble his liver would have caused him if Hashem was not supporting him always. And his heart is pumping and his kidneys are cleaning his blood. Who knows how many miracles he's experienced!

So now you have a number of reasons why your heart should be singing in happiness all the time. You're not bent over. Your spine is straight. You don't have a gangster who is waiting in front of

your house at night to collar you before you walk home. You go home tonight and there's nobody waiting outside for you. Your kidneys are functioning and there are no cancer cells running amuck in your body. Nothing is happening!

But let's remember that they *are* happening! Because if we look around we see things happening every day, all the time. People who are being taken in ambulances to the hospital; or in fancy limousines to the cemetery. And the purpose is to remind us that the same thing could be happening to us. If not for the kindness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the סומך נופלים, the זוקף כפופים, there goes I. What happened to him could have just as well happened to me if not for Hashem my shield.

### **Commiserate and Appreciate**

Now that's a valuable system of building up joy in one's heart. It may seem a little bit hardhearted that because of other people's misfortunes you are going to learn how to be happy, but you have to realize that's one of the purposes that Hakadosh Baruch Hu had in mind by showing us these misfortunes. He's doing us benefits at all times but if we're not aware of them we're not enjoying them fully. But when there's suffering in the world then it's possible for us to wake up and to realize what we are possessing now.

And so whenever you see in the street, whenever you read in the news, whenever you hear from your neighbors, of something that causes people sorrow, you should utilize that for yourself and appreciate what Hakadosh Baruch Hu is doing for you. Of course when you hear about someone who got bad news and is in the hospital *chas veshalom*, you should pray for him and you should commiserate with him; but still it should add to your store of happiness that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has saved you from that.

### **Marbin Besimcha**

And as a result you're going to come to the *middah* of *simcha* which is the *ratzon Hashem*. Recognizing the hidden miracles, recognizing the

סומך נופלים, that's going to be the extra stimulant, the reminder, to continue lowering that bucket into the fountain of happiness that's waiting to be unplugged. And it's going to generate in us such results that it will cause us to be happy and healthy. It will cause our bodies to perform at the maximum performance and it will help us discharge our obligations of serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

And if we practice in Adar, during these two months, then we'll gain the habit of happiness. And we'll rejoice in the joy that we created for ourselves and we'll be עובדים את ה' מתוך שמחה לאורך ימים, serving Hashem in happiness not only in Adar Alef and not only Adar Beis, but on Pesach and Shavuos and all summer and winter for many long years.

## LET'S GET PRACTICAL

### One Happiness a Day

There are thousands of happinesses that a person can enjoy in this world and it's by means of appreciating them one at a time that we build up a skyscraper of happiness that can't be moved. And therefore what better time to begin building than the upcoming two months of Adar.

For the next sixty days I will *bli neder* choose one detail of happiness every morning to practice up that day. I will study the happiness for a minute every morning and then as many times as possible during the day I will make it my business to enjoy that detail of life. The next day, a new detail. I will also keep track of the happinesses in a notebook so that I can review them every Shabbos.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

79 - Happiness | 261 - Be Happy

E-210 - The Habit of Happiness | E-262 - World of Models

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**Why do they allow secular library books in the major frum yeshivas? I want to avoid lashon hora so I won't mention the names of the yeshivas.**



The trouble is that in the yeshivas, the principal of the high school should be the rosh yeshiva himself. That's how it should be. The rosh yeshiva with the big white beard, he should be the principal of the high school because that's where we need him most.

In Frankfurt-am-Main, the frum German community had a gymnasium, a high school, and the teachers of the secular subjects were very *frum* Jews. A man once told me this - many years ago he was brought up there and he said that the man who taught him algebra taught him *mussar* and *yiras Shamayim* in the algebra class. He taught him algebra too.

That's how it used to be. In Frankfurt-am-Main, together with the secular subject, they taught him Torah and mitzvos. You can do that. You can show everything is connected with Torah. It's very important to utilize that.

But what do they do? They take somebody who once went to the yeshiva who has a college degree. He's a *frum* Jew, but he's shallow and he becomes a principal. He doesn't really have the spirit of Torah in him. And therefore, is it a surprise that sometimes he lets things get past him? Not such good things pass his inspection.

That's why I say that the rosh yeshiva should be in the high school office and should supervise everything. And then from the high school will go forth boys that are *tzaddikim*.

You know many boys are failures in Gemara. They're discouraged in the Gemara and therefore they turn away from the yeshiva. Even though they're in the yeshiva, they lose their idealism. But in the secular department, you can win them back. You can win them back in the secular department. It's easy because they're at home there. And if the teachers had idealism, then they could talk *yiras Shamayim* always in the secular department. TAPE # 724 (January 1989)