



THE VOICE, VOICE OF YAAKOV

APPLIED TORAH FOR
THE SERVICE
OF THE CREATOR

YAAKOV SHMUEL LEVINSON

YERUSHALAYIM
ISRAEL





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"הקול קול יעקב..."

THE VOICE, VOICE OF YAAKOV...

(Bereshis, Toldos 27, 22)

"קול יעקב - שמדבר בלשון תחנונים, קום גא..."

The voice of Yaakov... he speaks
with entreaty

(Rashi, Bereshis, Toldos 27, 22)

"א"ר ברכיה,
כשתה שיעקב מרכין בקולו,
ידי עשו שולטות...
וכשתה שהוא מצפצף בקולו,
אין הידים ידי עשו,
אין ידי עשו שולטות"

Rabbi Berachia said
When the voice of Yaakov weakens,
the hands of Esau prevail..
when the voice of Yaakov is heard,
there are no hands of Esau,
the hands of Esau do not prevail.

(Midrash Raba, Toldos 65, 20)



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לכבוד הרה"ח ר' יעקב לוינזון נ"י

קיבלתי הקונטרס עם דברי החיזוק ממה שאתה עומד להוציא לאור בעזרת השי"ת,

ואף שמחמת כובד עיני קשה לי קריאת הדברים, אך כיון שאני מכירך ויודע שאתה ירא שמים, וכל רצונך הוא לעזור ולהיטיב לכל אחד ואחד מישראל, לכן אבוא בברכה שתזכה שימצאו הדברים חן בעיני הקוראים ויהנו מהם, ויהיה מזה תועלת לרבים, ותזכה להמשיך לעשות רצון ה' בלימוד התורה ובמעשים טובים, ונזכה לביאת משיח צדקנו ולבנין בית המקדש במהרה בימינו.

יצחק שיינר
בית ישיבת קמניץ
ירושלים



Rabbi I.T. Weiss

Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem

Judge and Judicial Head of the Eidah Ha-Charedit

I hereby join in the above blessings, and the author should merit a flow of blessing and success and all the best, selah.



- ◆ ישיבה גבוהה לבעלי תשובה
- ◆ כולל אברכים בעלי תשובה
- ◆ מדרשה לבנות בעלות תשובה



מכתב ברכה

בס"ד. יום הששי ג' אדר ראשון תשע"ט. ירושלם ת"ו.

יום הילולא של מו"ז אא"ק ציס"ע איש מופת רבי יעקב מונסה זצ"ל

סנהדרין (צ"ט סע"א): "תניא היה רבי מאיר אומר הלומד תורה ואינו מלמדה זהו כי דבר ה' בזה".

וכתב עלה הגאון יעב"ץ ז"ל בהגהותיו: "ההכתוב ומבאר אותה למען המשכילים יבינו והתלמידים יעמדו על האמת, ויוסיפו לקח טוב, אין לימוד גדול מזה, ואין כבוד לתורה גדול ממנו".

וזו לשון קדשו של הגאון יעב"ץ ז"ל בספרו מגדל עוז (עלית הכתיבה אות ב'): "אם כותב חידושי תורה ומוסר לרבים אין קץ לשכרו, צדקתו עומדת לעד ובודאי אין לך הרבצת תורה גדולה מזו, וזכות הרבים תלוי בו כי יעמיד תלמידים הרבה, ישוטטו רבים ותרבה הדעת את ה', וביחוד אם הוא דר במקום שאין התורה תביבה, ובשעת המכנסין שאין הדיבור פועל מאומה, פזר דבריך בארבע רוחות העולם, ולא ימלט שימצאו מקומות שדברי תורה חביבים עליהם ויעשו פרי תבואה, ויתקיים על ידך כי לא תשכח מפי זרעו. עוד תדע שכל דבר חכמת בינה עם שקנה מציאות חלוש במחשבת הלב, וציור שכלי, והבל הדבור, ודאי עושה רושם גדול גם בעליונים ובוקע אוריים, **מכל מקום לא יצא לאור עולם להשיג מציאות עצמי חזק מאוד, עד שיכתב בספר**, כי על ידו נבראים עולמות חדשים כמו שאמר בספר הזהר, ומן הוא והלאה קנה קדושה ונשפע על המכתב ההוא אור עליון", ועוד עיין שם.

הגאון רבי אליהו הכהן ז"ל בספרו היקר שבת מוסר (סוף פרק ל"ה) האריך במעלת המחפש חידושי תורה ואביא כאן מעט מלשונו הקדושה: "כשם שעל ידי המצות והימים שאין אדם חוטא בהם נארג מלבוש, כך מכל חדושי תורה שאדם כותב נבנים למעלה היכלות וחופות נפלאים שתתעדן בהם הנשמה וכו', ובהיות כן ראוי לאדם שכל חידוש שמחדש שיעלהו על הספר, כדי שיפעל בנין למעלה, **ואפילו חידוש קטן אל יהא קל בעיניו וכו"** עש"ב, ועיין גם לגאון רבי חיים פאלאגי ז"ל בספרו נפש חיים (מערכת ח' אות כ') ע"ש.

מעלת ידידו היקר, טוב ומטיב לבריות, רבי יעקב שמואל לוינסון שליט"א הראה לי חיבורו היקר הנקרא בשם "הקול קול יעקב", אשר בו ליקט וסידר בטוב טעם מפי ספרים וסופרים עניני קנין המידות הטובות הנצרכות לעבודת ה' ולהתעלות ולהתקדם בעבודת ה' בשמחה וכו' ועוד, כאשר תחזינה עיני המעיין הי"ו.

והנה כבר רבנים גדולים שליט"א עלו בהסכמה על חיבורו זה, וגם אני עני כיהודה ועוד לקרא תיכון ידי עמהם, והנני לברכו שחפץ ה' בידו יצלח ודבריו יעשו פרי לטובה ישוטטו רבים ותרבה הדעת בקנין המדות הטובות, אשר כבר לימדנו החסיד רבינו יונה גירונדי זצ"ל בפירושו היקר למסכת אבות (פ"ג מ"ז): "אם אין דרך ארץ אין תורה. רצונו לומר שצריך תחילה לתקן את עצמו במדות ובה תשכון התורה עליו, שאינה שוכנת לעולם בגוף שאינו בעל מדות טובות, לא שילמוד התורה ואחר יקח לו המדות, כי זה אי אפשר" דו"ק היטב.

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הובא לפני הרה"ח המפואר מיקירי קרתא דשופרייא הרב יעקב שמואל לוינסון שליט"א קונטרס בשם הקול קול יעקב, והוא ליקוט על עניני עבודת המדות, שמחה וכו' וכבר קיבל הסכמת גדולי ישראל.

והנה בס"ד עברתי על הקונטרס ומצאתי בו דברים טובים השווה לכל נפש, ובו דברי חיזוק והדרכה להתעלות, והוא טוב לבחורים ובתולות זקנים עם נערים, ואמינא לפעלא יושר ויזכה להפיץ מעינותיו חוצה וטוב לכל א' שיביא ברכה לביתו להתענג בזיו המאמרים.

ואברכהו בברכת הדיוט שירבה פעלים לתורה ולתפלה ולמידות ולזכות את הרבים עד זקנה ושיבה מתוך בריות גופא ונהורא מעליא ולעלות לציון ברננה, אמן.

הכו"ח למען כבוד התורה





ישיבת קמוניץ
כנסת בית יצחק
עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
הרב פנחס דוד גרין
משגיח רוחני

בס"ד

יום יב טבת פה עיר הקודש ירושלים ת"ו
הנני בזה להמליץ על ספרו של ר' יעקב שמואל לעוונינסן שליט"א.
ר' יעקב במקצועו תזונאי, אבל לבו פתוח כאולם להרגיש בצערם של
הנוער ולרדת להרגשות לבם בהבנתו העמוקה.
יש לצאת מהתפעלות על העצות שהוא מביא להציל את הקורא מן
העצבות ודכאון היוצא מרגשי נחיתות שמצוי בזמנינו עיקבתא דמשיח, אצל
הרבה בחורים. בודאי יש תועלת גדולה בספרו לבני דורינו.
בזכות התועלת לרבים בוודאי הקב"ה יברך ר' יעקב ונות ביתו לרוות
הרבה נחת מכל צאצאיו וגם שיהיה להם ימים ארוכים ובריאים לאפשר
אותו להמשיך להועיל לכלל ישראל

בהוקרה והערכה
פנחס גרין







INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The importance of good character traits is known to all, with a multitude of texts already published.

If so, what is special about this publication?

The Voice, Voice of Yaakov brings a new, completely positive approach, with simple, applicable advice, on how to advance in the service of G-d with joy and through positive thought.

When the High Holidays end, for example, many revert to the previous habits which they had hoped to uproot. Having all good intentions, they did not tend to the root of their improper behavior trait, only trying to stop the undesired behavior (Sefer Sifsai Chain, Yomim Nerayim, 92).

Rabbi Chaim Vital, of blessed memory, outstanding disciple of the Holy Ari of Zefas, Israel, explains that “the foundations of keeping the Torah’s commandments (mitzvos) is through good character traits...” (Sefer Sharei Kedusha, Part 1, Gate 2).

Rabbi Chaim Vital writes, that the fathers of the character traits are: humility, silence (except for words of Torah and





INTRODUCTION

essential speech for existence and with respect to others), disdain for bodily pleasures in excess, and constant joy and happiness with one's portion.

The four good character traits are drawn from the four foundations: fire, air, water and earth, in the order as mentioned. (In contrast, there are four not good character traits: pride- which includes anger, idle talk, desire for delights and sadness.)

The approach of this text is positive. It is based on "doing good" in Torah and mitzvos, and in Judaism in general. The emphasis is on building good character traits and wonderful feelings with completeness of the soul. All of this through serving G-d with joy accompanied by positive thinking and happiness with one's portion.



Gratitude has supernal value in good character traits. Thus, I wish to extend my blessings for good health, livelihood, and satisfaction (nachas), and a special deep thanks to my dear wife, who taught me to understand that good character traits are the true measure of one's spiritual level. Perfection of character traits are the first obligation in learning Torah and in serving G-d. Therefore, she shares in the writing and in the reward for this text as a guide to obtaining good character traits.





INTRODUCTION

Additional great thanks from the depth of my heart, to Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Rotman Shlit'a, for the lengthy discussions on the topics of the book, and on its first reading. Through many years, he has been an outpouring fountain of Torah knowledge and the wisdom of life, as a wonderous advisor, and as a true friend in times of need.

My dream and prayer are, that this text **The Voice, Voice of Yaakov**, should contribute to implant in the hearts of many dear people, love for the Creator, love for Torah study, fulfilling of the Torah teachings, love of friends and the joy of life, and feelings of satisfaction with one's portion. Happy are we the Jewish people, as are all people, children of our Father in Heaven, who loves us so much.

Yaakov Shmuel Levinson

Holy City of Jerusalem 5779







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THINK POSITIVE!

CHAPTER ONE

THINK POSITIVE!

"וצדיק באמונתו יחיה"

The righteous lives by his faith.

(Chavakook 2,4)

A psalm of Dovid' The L-rd is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing. He lays me down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He revives my soul. He directs me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of His Name. Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they will comfort me. You will prepare a table for me before my enemies. You have anointed my head with oil. My cup is full. Only goodness and kindness will follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the House of the L-rd, for many years'

(Psalm 23)

INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE THINKING AND FAITH AND TRUST IN G-D

I wish to share with you my thoughts on the way to success. I believe that success is based on faith in G-d, followed by trust in G-d, which continues as applied by positive affirmations.

Faith, that is faith in G-d, with no doubt. Trust in G-d, that means: to depend on Him completely, and with no doubt. A





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strong foundation of faith and trust in G-d, gives a basis to building a positive approach to life. This can arrive through personal contemplation and also through prayer. Positive affirmations- by verbally repeating positive statements over and over, and creative visualization, thoughts in pictures, can both help to reach this goal. In effect, how does one build a positive approach to achieve one's goal? He builds faith in G-d and trust in G-d.

POSITIVE THOUGHT IN TORAH, THE PROPHETS AND THE WRITINGS

We see many examples of faith and trust in G-d which results in a positive outcome in stories of the righteous throughout the Torah.

The brothers of Yosef (Joseph) the Righteous - abandoned him in a deep pit, and he was taken by the Mideonites, who sold him to the Ismaelites, who brought him to Egypt. There, he was sold as a servant to Potifar, a high officer to the ruling Pharaoh. Yosef was thrown into prison after the false accusation by Potifar's wife. Surprisingly, when Yosef arrived at the Egyptian prison, it is said in the Torah (Vayeshev 39, 2): "He was a successful man...". Abandoned in a pit, imprisoned in Egypt with no justification, he is called "a successful man"?

He already possessed the potential character traits to





THINK POSITIVE!

achieve success, even before the success became a reality. His faith in G-d was strong, which brought him to a positive attitude and triumph, when he later became second to the king Paroah in Egypt (and ultimately Moshiach ben Yosef).



Similar greatness is revealed by the story of the young Dovid (David), who defeated the Philistine warrior, Goliath (Goliath). The Prophet Shmuel (Samuel) relates his success (Shmuel A: 7, 4).

We see the future King David (Moshiach ben Dovid) as proactive (approach initially aiming for the top). He did not wait for things to workout on their own. He took control and initiation, he created success. His behaviour grew from his elevated level of faith and trust in G-d.



The third Rebbe of Lubavitch, the Zemach Zedek, remarked to a follower whose wife became ill, 'Think good and it will be good', and in truth, the woman recovered. From then on this became a fixed expression. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of blessed memory, continued this traditional expression. He added (in the name of the Rebbe Moharash), (Lichatchila arriber, Yiddish) 'Aim for the highest', as a proactive approach.





THINK POSITIVE!

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

'Think good, and it will be good!'

This approach is hinted in the Book of Psalms (chapter 116, 10), where it is written, 'I have faith, as I speak...'. According to what I speak, I believe. We see that positive speech brings faith.

Saying positive statements to oneself is very important. Saying regular positive statements brings positive thoughts. Regular repetitions of positivity bring changes in bad habits.

See your mind as a recording - answer machine. If you encounter a problem that you regularly think negative thoughts, erase these messages, and record new positive messages. Get rid of those old, recorded negative messages.

When you awaken in the morning, pay attention the words which you speak to yourself. If they are negative, replace them with positive ones. Continue to check your thoughts throughout the day, and replace any negative thoughts with positive ones, also before you retire. Communication between the conscious and subconscious minds is elevated when one wakes in the morning, and before one retires at night, as well as when one concentrates in a relaxed state.





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At these times regular positive affirmations are more effective, as these times bring a positive orientation in the subconscious. Outline a positive statement, such as:

'The Jewish people trust in G-d'. Or, 'I am a successful person' or 'I have energy' etc.

These positive thoughts overpower the negativity, and promote realistic approaches to deal with the problem. If the opposite occurs, and you call yourself 'bad', you provide yourself with legitimacy to act in a bad way. In addition to the feelings of guilt which you feel, you do not obtain ability to dominate and to reach your goal.

In summation: Recognize the development and the changes you have already made in your habits, and think in a positive manner!



THINK POSITIVE!

ADVICE TO CREATE POSITIVE THOUGHTS

- *Smile.*
- *Deal with positive people.*
- *Help another with something.*
- *Sing.*
- *Use positive affirmations.*
- *Write five positive things that you have now.*
- *Be here now!*
- *Know that this will take time.*
- *Replace negative thoughts with positive ones.*

FAITH AND POSITIVE THINKING
IN THE TALMUD

The Tale of Rabbi Nachum Ish Gamzoo

After every occurrence, the righteous Rabbi Nachum would say, 'Also this is for the good'.



THINK POSITIVE!

Therefore, he was called 'Gam Zoo' (also this). This was his custom, even when an occurrence appeared negative. (Taanis, 21A, Sanhedrin 108B).

Once upon a time, the Jewish community wanted to send a present to the Emperor in Rome, in order to find favour in his eyes. They chose the righteous Rabbi Nachum as their messenger, and entrusted him with a treasure chest filled with precious stones and pearls. They chose Rabbi Nachum, since he had a reputation as having previously been surrounded by miracles.

He agreed, and he departed with this expensive present for the Emperor. On the way, he stopped at a tavern. However, during the middle of the night, the tavern owners opened the treasure chest, took the jewels, and cunningly replaced its contents with sand, so that the righteous man would not sense the difference in weight of his load.

When Rabbi Nachum arrived at the royal palace, the ministers opened the chest, and found, to their shock, not precious stones and pearls, but dust! Plain sand! The Emperor was greatly angered, and threatened to kill all the Jews, G-d forbid, because of this insult to his honour. Rabbi Nachum responded with trust, 'Also this is for the good', as was his usual habit. He put his trust in G-d.





THINK POSITIVE!

Suddenly, Eliyahu Ha-Navi (Elijah the Prophet) appeared, clothed as one of the ministers. He related to all, that Avraham (Abraham) our Father once conquered his enemy with special sand. When he threw this sand against the enemy, it turned to mighty, deadly spears. At that time, there was no nation that the Romans had not conquered, except for one, that until now they had not succeeded, and with the help of the sand, they did finally succeed!

After their victory, the Roman Emperor, filled with gratitude, again filled the treasure chest with precious stones and pearls, and sent all the jewels in return with Rabbi Nachum for the Jews.



The Tale of Rabbi Akiva

The righteous Tanna Rabbi Akiva regularly said, 'All that the Holy One does, He does for the good' (Brochos 60B).

Once upon a time, Rabbi Akiva travelled and stopped at sunset to setup camp outside, since none of the town's residents had invited him to stay with them inside their homes. He commented, as usual, 'All that the Holy One does, He does for the good'.





THINK POSITIVE!

He had brought a rooster, to awaken him at sunrise, and a candle to enable him to study during the night, and a donkey to ride upon.

What followed appeared for the worst. A wind extinguished his candle, a cat arrived and tore apart the rooster, and a lion tore apart his donkey.

Rabbi Akiva's response was, 'All that the Holy One does, He does for the good'.

After the fact, it was revealed that during the night, the ruler's army arrived at the town, and imprisoned all the residents!

Rabbi Akiva responded, did I not say, 'All that the Holy One does, He does for the good'! If the candle had been lit, the soldiers would have seen me. If the donkey had brayed or if the rooster had called, the soldiers would have found me.

ADVICE ON NULLIFYING THE JUDGEMENT

The 'Bas Ayin', the Admor of Avritch from the holy city of Zefas in the Galilee of Israel, writes good advice for us (Parshas Pinchas):

'Understand and learn always, even at the time that judgement prevails, think that it is kindness from the





THINK POSITIVE!

Creator, bless His Name, in order to return him to repent. And he will have a broken and crushed heart, and from this contemplation he will convert the attribute of judgement to the attribute of mercy, since it was definite in his heart that this attribute of judgment is one of mercy and kindness of the Creator, may He be blessed. And with this he will sweeten the judgement and will make the attributes of kindness and mercy. This is the manner where the righteous convert the attribute of judgement to the attribute of mercy...'

MANY PATHS TO THE CREATOR

Emotion, in general, is a faster path to faith in G-d, but it is temporary. Developing faith and trust in G-d through intellect, in general, is more permanent. In order to enter the intellect into trust in G-d, one could include, for example, studying the holy text 'Chovos halevavos' (Duties of the Heart), and especially the chapter 'Shar habitachon' (Gate to Trust).

Through prayer, and the manner in which one prays, this may also open a path to faith and trust in G-d.





THINK POSITIVE!

COMBINATION OF EMOTION AND THOUGHT

'And know this day, and place it on your heart'. (Ve'eschnon 4, 39)

Ha-Siporno explains, 'After contemplation move to your heart the true aspects, which is HaShem is Elokim'.

In 'Pasach Eliyahu'(Tikuni Zohar) is written, 'Chochma mocha ihu machshava mlegav. Binah liba, uva halev mayvin'. 'Chochma includes the intellect through which is found the strength of the intellect, which is within in the skull of the head. Binah is in the heart, of which our scholars taught (Talmud, Brochos 61) 'The heart understands'...the place of the intellect of Binah is above on the left side of the head, opposite the intellect of chochma, which on the right side. The above teaching has been attributed to the heart, as the main revelation of the light of Binah is in the heart, as it is on the left side under the intellect of Binah (commentary 'Masok Medivash, on Pasak Eliyahu, in the name of the text Sefer Eitz Chaim, Gate 31, Chapter 4).

In summary:

The more one works to develop faith and trust in G-d, he will receive more splendour, positiveness, optimism, and joy, so that G-d will help him to reach his goal.





THINK POSITIVE!

As brought in the text Eitz Chaim (Gate1, branch 1), that there is no king without a nation, and 'If He had no subjects, He would not be called 'King', and in this manner, all of His other titles. Thus, this is the reason for the creation of the world, so to speak.

My prayer is, 'Master of the universe, You are our Father, our King. If there was no Jewish nation, You would be neither a Father nor a King. Therefore, have mercy upon us, allowing our existence in the world, and return us in complete repentance before You, as children who merit to have a Father and a King as You, so should it be Your will.

'We are Your nation and You are our G-d. We are Your children and You are our Father...We are Your flock, and You are our shepherd...We are Your treasure, and You are our G-d..'

(Yom Kippur prayer).





JOY, KEY TO SERVING THE CREATOR

CHAPTER TWO

JOY, KEY TO SERVING THE CREATOR

"ישמח לב מבקשי ה"

'May the heart of those who seek the L-rd rejoice.'

(Psalms 105, 3)

"ונשמח בדברי תלמוד תורתך, ובמצותיך לעולם ועד"

'Rejoice in the words of Your Torah and Your mitzvos forever and ever'

(Evening prayers, Ahavas Olam)

INTRODUCTION TO JOY

The Talmud writes (Tainis 22A):

Rabbi Broka the Seer frequented the market place in Dvei Lefet. Eliyahu Ha-navi (Elijah the Prophet) was there with him. 'Is there someone here now who has a place in the World-to-Come', asked the Rabbi? Eliyahu the Prophet replied, 'Those two also have a place in the World-to-Come'. The Rabbi went to them and inquired, 'What are your occupations?' They replied, 'We are happy people, and we make others happy'.

The Talmud discusses the importance of happiness (Shabbos





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30B), 'The Divine Presence does not dwell amid sadness, and not by laziness, nor with idle laughter, and not among light-headedness, and not with idle talk, but only amid joyousness of fulfilling a mitzvah (Torah command), as it says, 'Take a musician, and when the musician played, the hand of G-d was upon him (the prophet Elisha) (Talmud Pesachim 117A).

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

'Happiness is an internal feeling, that flows from the depth of the heart, a feeling of wealth and delight, that comes from satisfaction, when attaining wholeness, or a sought-after necessary object. Happiness awakens in a person who is in a state of feeling wholeness or perfection and tranquillity, with nothing worrying or disturbing him.' (publication by Yeshiva 'Dvar Yerushalayim, 'Simcha in the mirror of Judaism', Dvar Yerushalayim publication, chapter 2, 18).

With joy, comes excitement, longing, emotion and devotion, to enlighten the soul. Joy ignites the soul in a flame of delight and a cleaving, rejoicing, singing, joyful dancing, and gladness.

Joy in prayer, joy of a mitzvah (fulfilling a Torah commandment), the blessing on holidays (zeman simchaseinu), the joy of the holidays, the joy of the bride and groom, the joy of the first fruits, the joy of the bris milah celebration, the joy of the Succos





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holiday water libation, Simchas Torah, the joy of Purim... 'the Jews had light and joy and gladness and honor' (Megillas Esther).

Yeshiah (Isaiah) the Prophet had spiritual benefit from his joy as is written in 'Tanna debei Eliyahu': 'He said to me (Elijah the Prophet), how does Yeshiah the son of Amotz differ from all the other prophets, that he prophesized all the good and consolation to the Jewish people, more than all the other prophets? I said to him, it is since he received the yolk of Heaven with joy, more than the other prophets...' (Eliyahu Raba16).

In the text 'Shaar ha-Kavanos' from the writings of the Ari z'l (Drush birkas ha-shachar) by Rabbi Chaim Vital, of blessed memory, outstanding disciple of Rabbanu Yitzchok Luria, (known as the Ari z'l), of blessed memory, of Zefas in the Holy Land of Israel, is written, 'almost the main contributor to ascent and perfection in achieving Divine inspiration is dependent upon this (joy), whether at the time of one's prayer, or when one performs a Torah commandment'.

In summary:

Through joy, faith and trust are strengthened. The foundation of joy - faith and trust in G-d. As is written in the text 'Orchos Tzadikim' (Shar ha-Simcha), 'One who believes with a full heart and trusts in the help of the Rock (G-d), is for ever joyous'.





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'Happy are we, how good is our portion, and how pleasant is our lot, and how beautiful is our inheritance'

THE PATH TO JOY IN LIFE - DEFINITE DECISION!

'Choose life, for the sake of your life and the lives of your offspring (Nitzavim 30, 19)

At all times you need to decide, happiness or sadness? This is not always easy. **Choose** happiness and joy! If you do not choose, it will not be. Flame to be a Jew! Upon arising, recite the blessing 'shelo asani goy' (thanking G-d for having created you as a Jew, with extra commandments and the Torah) **with feeling.**

Connect with our Jewish symbols, the signs and reminders of Jewish life... the Torah scroll, the holy texts, tefillin, mezuzah, Shabbos garments, Jewish dress, shofar, megillah, and matzoh. Cleave with gratitude to the Creator of the world, sing with all your heart, 'Thank you, Almighty!'

Do not be satisfied with this alone, just responding to whatever happens. Rather, act with all your might, be proactive. 'Aim for the highest from the start' ('litchatchila arriber', as the holy Rebbe of Lubavitch, of blessed memory, was accustomed to say in the name of the Rebbe Moharash). **Decide with boldness to be a happy person.**





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And after this, when you decide with all your might to be a happy person, with the help of G-d, do not be swayed by the influences around you. Then, when you truly decide, the door to success will be open.

ENDURANCE OF JOY

'An eternal fire burns on the altar, not to be extinguished'
(morning prayer, korbanos sacrifices)

After the definite decision to be always joyous, comes a burning desire and a boiling heart. The intensity of the desire will depend on the strength of the original decision.

For example, if we pour boiling water on wheat, this will prevent oxygenation. So, in the example, the burning desire prevents nullification of the original decision.

There are many ways to strengthen the decision to be a 'happy person'. Each person will relate to a different method, according to his personality and soul. My intention is to mention several possibilities, and for you to choose what speaks to you, with G-d's help.

Each person requires a different type of fuel to enable him to continue to apply his decision, to enable him to be a joyous person.



THOUGHTS WHICH AID HAPPINESS

- *Positive thinking (see chapter one)*
- *Joy with one's portion (see chapter four)*
- *Happy friends (see chapter three)*
- *Contemplate the wonders of the Creator in nature*
- *Positive affirmations (like, 'A Jew trusts in G-d')*
- *Eliminating doubt*
- *Imaging exercises (visualization of pictures in the mind)*
- *Feelings of success*
- *Helping another person intellectually*
- *Reading happy and positive literature*
- *Discussions with close, positive friends*

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ACTIVITIES WHICH LEAD TO HAPPINESS

- *Playing music and singing*
- *Dancing*
- *Physical activity, including walking*
- *Praying and studying with joy*
- *Jokes before learning Torah (to open the mind)*
- *Helping another person through action*
- *Eating tasty food*
- *Experiencing the joy of the Sabbath and holidays*
- *Performing the Torah commandments with joy*
- *Happy occasions and parties*
- *Friendly gatherings*
- *Relaxation exercises*
- *Creating new things*
- *Living out your dreams*



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VERSES AND WORDS OF JOY

In order to understand and feel the true emphasis of happiness in Judaism, I am listing several verses and words of joy, as examples:

- *"Serve G-d with joy, come before Him with songs of joy"*
- *"The only joy is the joy of fulfilling a mitzvah"*
(Torah command)
- *"There is no happy occasion without eating meat"*
- *"As you rejoiced my heart"*
- *"Since you did not serve G-d with joy..."*
- *"Be joyous with your holiday"*
- *"The light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the straight-hearted"*
- *"The happy-hearted entreat G-d"*
- *"The heavens rejoice and the earth is joyful"*
- *"G-d's commandments are upright and rejoice the heart"*





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- *"The righteous sing joyously for G-d"*
- *"As our hearts rejoice, as we trust in His holy Name"*
- *"I was joyous as I spoke to myself saying I will go to the house of G-d"*
- *"The Jews rejoice with His doings"*
- *"This is the day which G-d made, rejoice and be joyous"*
- *"We are joyous in the words of learning Your Torah, and in your commandments forever and ever"*

HUMOUR BEFORE TORAH STUDY

In the Talmud is written, 'Rabeh was accustomed, before giving a lecture to his disciples, to begin with a funny statement, causing the students to laugh. Their hearts were opened through happiness, so that they could concentrate better on the teachings (Shabbos 30B).

From the Baal Shem Tov, founder of the modern Hassidic movement, in regards to humour before studying, is explained that joy brings one from constricted to expanded consciousness in learning and cleaving to G-d, He should be blessed (Keser Shem Tov, 37).





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It is written in the name of the Seer of Lublin (Toras ha-Chozeh me-Lublin, 286B): ‘...ve-haya ekev tishmiou,’ ve-haya’ is an expression of joy, that one should remember something that once gave him happiness, in order that he should have joy and understanding in Torah learning, as is brought in the writings of the Ari, that “sadness nullifies perception...”.

JOY THROUGH PRAYER

Also found in the writings of the holy Ari (Shaar ha-Kavanos, Inyan birkas ha-shachar): “It is forbidden for one to pray in sadness. If he does so, his soul cannot receive the Supernal light which is drawn upon him at the time of prayer...he should be especially joyous and expanded, as much as possible, as the example of a servant who serves his master with excessive happiness. If he would serve him with sadness, his labour would be repulsive. Almost the main contributor to ascent and perfection in achieving Divine inspiration is dependent upon this (joy), whether at the time of one’s prayer, or when one performs a Torah commandment...”

In the name of the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, it is written (Keser Shem Tov, 229): “Prayer that is with great joy is certainly more important and better received before Him than a prayer in sadness and crying. An example of this, is





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when a poor man asks and requests, and pleads before a human king with great weeping, he receives very little. But when a minister arranges a great banquet and amongst the praise he makes his request, the king grants him a great present as given to ruling authorities”.

Also, likewise, writes Rabenu ha-Rav Yosef Chaim, of blessed memory (known as the Ben Ish Chai): “Every person who prays to G-d, even though he is in great despair, should not pray in sadness and bitterness, but rather with joy, as though he is steeped in goodness with no misfortune at all” (Od Yosef Chai, V’etchanan).

FOUNDATION OF PRAYER - A HAPPY HEART TO G-D

As it says (Psalms 105, 3): “Praise His holy Name. May the heart of those who seek the L-rd rejoice”.

Therefore, Dovid, King of Israel, played his harp with every prayer to fill his heart with joy in love of G-d...’ (Sefer Chasidim, 18, Rabenu Yehuda ha-Chasid, of blessed memory).





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JOY THROUGH MUSIC AND SINGING

“And now, take for me a musician, and when the musician played, the hand of G-d was upon him (the Prophet)” (Melachim B: 3,15).

“It is good to praise the L-rd, and to sing to Your Name, Most High” (Psalms 92).

“Sing to Him, chant praises to Him, relate all of His wonders” (Psalms 105).

Music brings joy. Joy brings faith and trust in G-d, and more joy.

The Rambam writes (in Shmona Perakim, chapter 5) “And so, one who is pulled into sadness can rid himself of this by listening to tunes and songs...”.

The text ‘Avelus ha-Chorban’ (published by the Dvar Yerushalayim Yeshiva) explains, “Even though one is not permitted to hear musical instrumental music due to mourning for the destruction of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, never-the-less, when one listens to music in order to improve his mood, it is permitted”.

The Vilna Gaon greatly praised the wisdom of music, as quoted in the introduction to a text written by his disciple





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(Pas ha-Shulchan): "He (the Gaon) was accustomed to say that most of the reasons of Torah and secrets of the songs of the Levites and of the Tikuni ha-Zohar are impossible to know without this. And this knowledge can allow one's soul to depart through its pleasantness. And it can enable one to resurrect the dead through the hidden secrets of the Torah. He said that several melodies and qualities were brought from Moshe Rabenu (Moses our teacher) from Mount Sinai (upon receiving the Torah from G-d), and the rest are composed from these...".

Music brings one to joy (for those who are sensitive to it), tranquillity, opening of the heart, and cleaving to G-d.

THE HARP OF DOVID, KING OF ISRAEL

Rabbi Acha son of Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida, "A harp was hanging above the bed of Dovid. When midnight arrived, a north wind drew the strings and the harp played by itself. Immediately, he stood up and studied Torah until sunrise" (Talmud Brochos, 3b).

The Prophet Shmuel (Samuel) writes regarding the bold dance of King David, with great joy upon the arrival of the ark of G-d to the City of David:





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‘And David leaped around before the L-rd with all his might...So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the L-rd with shouting, and with the sound of the shofar

(Shmuel B, 23, 14-15).

David succeeded in calming King Shaul (Saul) and in removing his evil spirit through playing his harp.

King David revealed his love for music in the Psalms. Listed below are verses of song and music contained in the Pesukeh d’zimra of the Sabbath morning prayers:

“Sing to Him, play to Him”

“A Psalm, a Song of Dedication of the House, by David”

“Therefore, my soul shall sing to You, and not be silent.”

“For the Choirmaster, a Psalm by David”

“Extol the L-rd with a harp. Sing to Him with a ten-stringed lyre.”

“Sing to Him a new song”

“Sing to the L-rd with a harp, with a harp and the sound of song. With trumpets and the sound of the shofar”

“Praise the L-rd, for the L-rd is good. Sing to His Name, for He is pleasant”

“A Psalm, a song for the Sabbath. It is good to praise the L-rd, and to sing to Your Name”





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“with a ten-stringed instrument and lyre, to the melody of a harp”

“Praise the L-rd, O my soul. I shall sing to the L-rd with my soul”

“Praise the L-rd. Sing to the L-rd for He is good.”

‘Praise the L-rd. Sing to the L-rd a new song”

“They will praise His Name with dancing. They will sing to Him with the drum and the harp.”

“The exaltation of G-d is in their throat”

“Praise Him with the call of the shofar. Praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbril and dance. Praise Him with stringed instruments and flute. Praise Him with resounding symbols. Praise Him with clanging cymbals. Let every being that has a soul praise the L-rd. Praise the L-rd” (Psalms 150)

Also, similarly, in the Torah it is written, “Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the L-rd...”

Joy and song fill the Book of Psalms of King David, hinting to us his love of G-d, as a path to faith and trust in the Creator.





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SONG IN THE WORLD TO COME

Rabbi Eliezar learned in a baraisa, "All who say this song (Perek Shira) in the world, will merit to say it in the World to Come, as it says, 'Then Moshe will sing'". "Sings" (present tense) it does not say. Rather, "Will sing it in the World to Come" (future tense).

Rabbi Yehoshua the son of Levy said, "All who say Shira (Perek Shira, the Chapter of Song) in this world, will merit to say it in the World to Come". As is said, "Happy are those who dwell in Your House. They shall yet praise You forever (Psalms 84,5)". And Rabbi Chiya the son of Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanon: In the future all of the prophets who recited the Perek Shira with one voice will rejoice (Talmud Sanhedrin 91B). And the prophet Eliyahu (Elijah) of blessed memory, continues that the ministering angels do not say Shira in the upper world until the Jews first say Shira in this world (Eliyahu Zuta 25).

In the World to Come, when our righteous Moshiach (Messiah) will arrive, speedily in our days, and very soon, also the trees will regain their strength which they lost due to the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge. All trees, even those that are now fruitless, will be filled with special fruits. These fruits will again have the taste of the Manna as they





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once had in the Garden of Eden. And the trees will then sing, as expressed in the Psalms of King David, "then **all** the trees of the forest will sing (Psalms 96, 12)".

And like the trees, likewise mankind who are compared to the trees of the field. And the entire Creation will rejoice and sing praises with us, a prayer of thanks, and the Holy One will be joyous, our Father our King, the Holy Creator and King of the world.





“WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?”

CHAPTER THREE

“WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?”

OR FRIENDSHIP OR DEATH

Once upon a time, the righteous Choney ha-Magel, slept for seventy years! When he awoke, he wandered among his family members and previous students, but they did not recognize him. With a broken heart, he sighed in pain, saying, “Or friendship or death”, and with these words, he passed on (Talmud Tainis 23A)“.

“WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?”

In the Torah portion Balaq, G-d asks Bil’am, upon the arrival of the messengers of King Balaq, “Who are these people?”(Bamidbar 22,9).

The holy Rabbi, the Or ha-Chaim, the memory of the righteous should be a blessing, explains that Bil’am had the





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messengers enter his special chamber to speak with them. G-d was meticulous in defending Bil'am's honor, as he had been a prophet, and the messengers were not on his level (Or ha-Chaim, Bamidbar 22, 9).

According to the commentary of the Beer Mayim Chaim, of blessed memory, “Who are these people, who are not important as yourself, who you bring in with you?” (Beer Mayim Chaim, Balaq 282).

The Rebbe of Riminov, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh, of blessed memory, says that here, “Two evil ones united to do evil to the holy Jewish nation” (Beeras ha-Mayim, Balaq).

They were good friends, but their intention was to harm and to do evil.

IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos states (Chapter 1, Mishna 6), “Yehoshua the son of Perachyah said: Provide yourself with a teacher, acquire for yourself a friend, and judge every person favourably”. “Acquire for yourself a friend”, even if its costs you a lot of money” (Bartenura commentary on the Mishna).

And why does the Mishna end with “and judge every person favourably”? The Rebbe of Kamarna, of blessed





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memory, explains, “In this manner your friendship will be pleasant and lasting”(Notser Chesed on Avos, page 4).

We see that it is the nature of people to sit together and to serve and help one another. Rabbenu Yona writes regarding, “acquire for yourself a friend”, that for three reasons one needs a good friend: for words of Torah, for fulfilling the mitzvos (commands), and for advice, to learn from him and to ascend to a higher spiritual level.

“And the wise have said, each bird to its kind will dwell, and each man to those similar to himself”(Tanna debei Eliyahu Raba, chapter 12).

FRIENDSHIP IN THE TORAH

Regarding our forefather Avraham (Abraham) it is written, “And the L-rd appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre...” (Bereshis 18,1).

Thus, according to Rashi, of blessed memory, this explains why G-d chose an open, revealed settlement, Alonay Mamre, since Avraham’s friend, “Mamre” gave him good advice regarding the mila.

Thus, Mamre had revelation of G-dliness in his portion. The Medrash Tanachuma writes that Avraham had three





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close friends, Aner, Eschol, and Mamre (Tanachuma, Veyera 3). Avraham received good advice and wisdom from them all.

There was abounding love between Dovid ben Yishai and Jehonasan, his brother-in-law, the son of King Shaul (Saul). When Shaul wanted to kill Dovid, Johonasan fled to the field to warn Dovid. When they met, they kissed each other and cried. Johonasan said, “Go in peace, seeing that we have sworn both of us in the name of the L-rd, saying, the L-rd is between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever”.

In the Midrash Tanna debei Eliyahu is written, “that Devorah (Debra) the Judge and Prophetess, had an unlearned husband named Barak. So that he should merit a place in the World-to-Come, she sent him to the Temple in Jerusalem to make wicks for the menorah, in order that he should be among kosher Jews (Eliyahu Raba, chapter 7).

Story of “Acher” (Other, alias Elisha) once great in Torah, who fell to disbelief. The baraisa writes (Talmud Chagiga 14B): “The Rabbis taught that four entered the orchard (paradise), Ben Azai, Ben Zoma, Acher, and Rabbi Akiva. Acher trimmed the young plants of the orchard (proverbial statement) which ruined his perception when he neared the (spiritual) Chariot. A voice from Heaven (Bas kol) called out, “Return my children who have gone astray, except for Acher”. And due to this, feeling





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no hope, he ceased keeping Torah and its commandments (mitzvos).

When Acher died, Rabi Yochanon said, “There was among us a student who stumbled and left the ways of Torah. Can we not rescue him? Since he was one of us, it is upon us to help him! Rabi Yochanon said, “If I take him with my hand, I will take him out of gehinom (hell) and bring him into the World to Come. When Rabi Yochanon passed on, the smoke that had constantly emanated from Acher’s grave ceased, a sign that Rabi Yochanon had removed him from that place of punishment.

WHO IS THE BEST FRIEND?

The holy Zohar (Vayeshev) reveals a reason to educate a child before the age of Bar Mitzvah, when he is exempt from keeping the Torah commandments.

From birth, the Yetzer Hara (evil inclination) arrives, which influences the child.

At the time of Bar Mitzvah (13 for a male child, 12 for a female), the true friend arrives, the Yetzer Tov (good inclination). In order that the child will agree to listen to the good advice of the Yetzer Tov, we teach a child Torah and mitzvos during the





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years preceding the Bar Mitzvah. All this, so when he finally reaches the age of Bar Mitzvah, he will not say, “Who are you? I only know the other, the Yetzer Hara (bad inclination). Only he has been with me all the years!”

Through this, we understand the important benefit in Judaism of good friendships, and connection to good people, especially Torah scholars with love and fear of Heaven, and righteous friends, for success in the service of G-d.





RECTIFICATION OF CHARACTER TRAITS

CHAPTER FOUR

RECTIFICATION OF CHARACTER TRAITS

**"כי הנשמה קודם ירידתה לעוה"ז אין מחסור לה בשום דבר, כי היא
בנועם זיו העליון, אף תכלית הבריאה הייתה שגם בעולם. זה, העולם
הגשמי תעבוד את השי"ת"**

"The soul, before her descent into this world, lacks nothing, since she is in the
delight of the supernal radiance. The purpose of the Creation is that also, in
this world, the world of physicality, you will serve G-d..."

(Sifse Chain, U'sefartem lachem 97)

**"והבן זה מאוד - איך היסודות של קיום המצות הן על ידי מידות
הטובות..."**

"And understand this well, how the foundation of fulfilling the mitzvos
(commandments) is through good character traits..."

(Sharei Kedusha, part 1, gate 2, Rabbi Chaim Vital)

IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING PIRKE AVOS (ETHICS OF THE FATHERS)

'Fathers implies there are offspring'

The Rabbi of Slonim, of blessed memory, writes in his Torah
discourse "Nesivos Shalom" (Introduction to Pirke Avos): "Purity





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of character traits is the vehicle and the preparation for inspiration in Torah, since they are like fathers to receiving the Torah'.

In continuation, the Rabbi says, " The Torah was given after rectification of character traits, since fixed character traits are the vehicle to Torah inspiration. The manner in which one purifies his character traits, allows the Torah to reside in him. And for this intention a Jew enters the world, to change his nature and the traits of his soul".

So, good character traits are the fathers, and words of Torah are the descendants.

LOVE PEACE AND PURSUE PEACE

The Talmud (Chagiga 17a) brings in the name of the Jerusalem Talmud, that previous to the Rabbis Hillel and Shammai there had been only one legal dispute, whether it was permitted to lean on an animal sacrifice on a holiday. The question is, that when one leans on an animal, he is using the animal on a holiday, which the Rabbis forbid.

The Tosefus commentary (starting 'Yosi ben Yoezer) continues, "Shammai and Hillel established four (disputes). As the disciples of Shammai and Hillel increased, the disputes in Israel





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increased in two factions...". (Tosefus states in Talmud Shabbos 14b that they only found three disputes).

DISPUTE FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN

In Pirke Avos is written (Chapter 5, Mishna 20): "Every dispute which is not for the Sake of Heaven, will not endure...Which is a dispute that was for the Sake of Heaven? This was the dispute of Hillel and Shammai. And that which was not for the Sake of Heaven? This was the dispute of Korach and his congregation.

The Talmud relates in tractate Shabbos (31a): The Rabbis learned a story of a gentile who came before Shammai (with disrespectful questions). Shammai drove him away in anger. Hillel was tolerant and received him. The baraisa concludes, "The severity of Shammai threatened to banish us from the world. The humility of Hillel brought us under the wings of the Divine Presence".

The Pirkei Avos describes, (chapter 1, Mishna 12): "Hillel said, Be like the students of Aaron, love peace and run after peace, love people, and bring them near to the Torah".

How is it possible to reach the level of "Love peace and run after peace"?





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Rabbi Avraham Azulai was a great kabbalist who served as the rabbi of Gaza, and thereafter of Hebron. He writes in his commentary on Pirkei Avos (chapter 1,12), "Initially, one needs internal peace within himself".

Rabbi Simcha Shlomo Levin, son of the famous, holy Rabbi Aryeh Levin, of blessed memory, writes, "In the dispute not for the sake of Heaven, between Korach and Moses our teacher, the wife of On ben Peles, saved him. The rabbi explains, 'At the root of the dispute between Korach and Moses was a lack of peace between Korach and his wife. In contrast, peace ruled between On ben Peles and his wife, who saved him from stumbling into dispute outside his home'".

An important point, incidentally, is that peace does not imply "identical thinking". What is important is that there is "one heart", which does not exist in disputes.

In relation to peace, the Nesivos Shalom, the previous Slonimer Rebbe, of blessed memory, writes in his commentary on Pirkei Avos (chapter 1, 12): "The attribute of peace is greater than all...and the opposite of peace is dispute, as this is rooted in the incorrect thought that each person is a separate entity, the opposite of unity and peace...this is the level of peace, where each is united and subservient to G-d, enlivening all".





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In the sole Mishna in Pirkei Avos by Shammai (chapter 1, 15), Shammai changes his approach from a sharp to a soft person. And it is written in his name: "Receive every person with a beautiful countenance".

Clearly, after Shammai heard from his friend Hillel, "Be like the students of Aaron, love peace and run after peace, love others, and bring them near to Torah", that he changed his approach. He then said, "Receive every person with a beautiful countenance. (The Grand Rabbi of Lubavitch, of blessed memory, Likutei Sichos, volume 27, page 347). This changed approach was accepted among Torah authorities of future generations.

The Talmud (Brochos 17a) tells us that Abaye was accustomed to say that one should increase peace with his brothers and friends, and with everyone, and the non-Jew in the marketplace, so that he should be loved above and delightful below, and acceptable to all. It was said about Rabban Yochanon ben Zakai that no one preceded him in greeting "Shalom" (hello, peace), not even a non-Jew in the marketplace.

CHOOSE A RAV (RABBI, TEACHER)

Twice in Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the Fathers) there is written, "Choose (make for yourself) a Rav".

In chapter one (Mishna 6): Yehoshua son of Perachia says,





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“Make for yourself a Rav, purchase a friend, and judge each person with the benefit of the doubt”. Following this, in the same chapter (Mishna 16): Rabban Gamliel was accustomed to say, “Make for yourself a teacher, and depart from doubt, and do not tithe by estimate”.

Why twice?

As we mentioned previously, before Hillel and Shammai, there was only one dispute in the entire Oral Law. Between Hillel and Shammai there were only three or four disputes. “With an increase of more students, there was an increase of dispute among the Jews, and they divided into two factions (Tosefus “Yossi ben Yoezer”, Chagiga 16a).

Yehoshua ben Prachia preceded Hillel and Shammai. Rabban Gamliel the Elder came after them. After Hillel and Shammai, there were many disputes in Jewish Law, so there became a need for a Rav (Rabbi) to determine the Law (Avos 1, Mishna 16). Therefore, Rabban Gamliel adds: “to go out from doubt”. Yehoshua ben Prachia preceded Hillel and Shammai, and in his time there was no doubt in legal matters of the Torah. The rabbi sought was of a different sort, like a guide, advisor, and personal example of how to serve G-d, also in our times.

How can one find such a rabbi?





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The Talmud recommends (Chagiga 15b): "And Raba bar Bar Chana said in the name of Rabi Yochanon, Why is it written (Malachi 2,7): "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek Torah at his mouth: for he is a messenger of the L-rd of hosts"? If he resembles an angel of G-d, ask for words of Torah, and if not, do not inquire for words of Torah.

How does an angel of G-d look?

Angels remain in one place spiritually, and a Jew needs to progress, to be a "walker"! The Rambam (Rabbi Moshe Maimonides, writes in his Mishna Torah, Hilchos Talmud Torah 4,1) "And so, a Rabbi who does not go in a correct way, even though he is a great Torah scholar and everyone needs him, one should not learn from him until he returns to the good".

So, truly, how does one know who should be his Rabbi?

The Grand Rabbi of Kaliv, of blessed memory, helps us here with "Make for yourself a Rabbi" in his text Kol Menachem on Pirke Avos 1, 16. "One must examine what is meant by "Make for yourself"? How does one establish oneself as a rabbi? One must preface that in the writings of the students of the Baal Shem Tov (founder of the Hassidic movement of Judaism) is written in regard to this question, that he should see **what his heart is drawn after**, as a sign that the rabbi knows the root of his soul, and that he can rectify all blemishes".





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RECTIFICATION OF CHARACTER TRAITS IN GENERAL AND IN PARTICULAR

It is a positive commandment in the Torah to remember what Amalek did to us, when he began to challenge us, as we escaped from Egypt. As it is written in the Torah portion Ki Tissa (Devarim 25, 17) "Remember what Amalek did to you by the way, when you left Egypt". "You" specifically. And there is a commandment not to forget what Amalek did to us.

Every Jew is instructed to erase the offspring of Amalek and to destroy their memory from the world, as it says (Devarim 25, 19) "Blot out the memory of Amalek".

And in particular, Amalek penetrated his evil amidst every character trait of every one of us. Accordingly, one can deduct this from:

"Remember what Amalek did to YOU" (Sifse Chen, Purim 35). This is the klipah (kabbalistic term for fallen sparks or husks) of Amalek that wanted to enter among the Jewish people, to cause dominance over us (Pri Tzaddik, Zachor 4).

The previous Slonomer Rebbe, of blessed memory, wrote (Purim, Mi sheh nichnas Adar, 7), that 'Being happy with one's lot' includes all of the character traits. It is the greatest of all character traits. The Rebbe continues that this is the





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purpose of all, that a Jew should be happy and satisfied with the conduct of the Creator. It is the great value of the trait of 'being happy with one's lot', that leads to all this. It is the greatest of all character traits, and it does wonders in one's heart. This is the aim of every Jew, happiness and satisfaction with the management of the Creator...and it is the great worth of the trait of 'happiness with one's portion' with causes all of this.

As well, in the writings of the Vilna Goan, of blessed memory (Even Shlema, chapter 3, letter 1,2) we find something similar: "Trust and satisfaction, these are the main principles of all good character traits...All transgression and sin come from coveting, as it is written, "You shall not covet" includes all the commandments and all of the Torah.

Satisfaction, which is the opposite, is the foundation of the entire Torah."

WHAT IS THE PATH TO BEING JOYOUS WITH ONE'S PORTION?

"Who is wealthy? He who is satisfied with his portion" (Avos 4, 1)

"Happy are we, how good is our portion" (in morning prayer)





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Many people, when they hear the expression "happy with one's portion", think about what they are lacking, and what they are not happy about. Begin to rejoice with what you have now, not what you perceive as lacking. Be happy with what you have now. Change direction, with positive thinking. Thank you, Ha-Shem (the Creator), for You have given me so much!

And after this, make an effort to improve the situation, and continue to rely on G-d.

The Ben Ish Chai, of blessed memory, writes (Chasdei Avot, Ben Ish Chai, chapter 4, 9): "Know that wealth comes as a reward for the joy which a person has in Torah and mitzvot, as it is written (Kohelet 9, 7): " Go and eat your bread in joy, and drink your wine with a good heart".

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of blessed memory, said (Sichos Shabbas, Korach) , a person who is at peace with himself, has more chance of benefitting from various opportunities which reach him. Therefore, he has a greater chance to succeed in the world.





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GRATITUDE

Gratitude – can bring one to happiness with one’s portion, to repentance from love, to a good eye, and to good character traits in general.

Firstly, we must be grateful to the Creator.

“And You chose us from every nation and tongue”(morning prayer before the Shema Yisroel). Our Father, our King, who created His world to be a King, so that He would have a nation (Eitz Chaim, chapter 2).

Following this thought, continue: “You make us holy through Your commandments, and give us a portion in Your Torah”(morning Sabbath prayer). Have gratitude, that we have the holy Torah, and gratitude for all that we have, and specify as much as you can. He who has more gratitude, as a result of this contemplation, will have more happiness with his portion in life.

PERSONAL RECTIFICATION

In order to decrease the feeling of lacking something in life, think that each of us receives what he needs from Heaven, in order to rectify, for his good.





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"...Do not be jealous of anyone, since everything is by Divine Providence, according to the fitting measure for each, in truth, given to him by the Creator" (Yesod HaAvodah, part 2, chapter 2, 5).

As it is written in the Mishna (Avos, chapter 1, 10): "...Shemaya said, Love work...". The purpose of life is to rectify all that comes to you through Heaven, to fix your work, with love!

PURIM AND HAPPINESS WITH ONE'S LOT

Purim is the time of repentance through love, receiving of the Torah through love. The joy of Purim gives one the capability to ascend to a higher level in the service of the Creator, above that of the entire year.

Purim is the time to feel "Who is wealthy? He who is happy with his lot".

"Purim" hints at "Pur" or our "portion". The lottery of Purim at ancient Shushan in the times of Megillas Esther, reminds us to think about our own lot (Hebrew, Pur) from the Almighty. And through this we are prepared to accept the Torah through love and to accept our own situation joyously, since the revelation of the light of Purim, the singing and the happiness leads us to feel and sing, "Happy are we, how





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good is our portion, and how pleasant is our lot, and how beautiful is our inheritance”.

And in this merit, the Creator, may He be blessed, should help us blot out our internal Amalek, the cause of our individual inappropriate character traits, and to rectify all of these traits (*midos*), by repentance through love on Purim, so should it be His Will.

The service of the Creator always makes a spiritual impression, also on Purim. After Purim one must work to return to this previous spiritual level, with the help of G-d.

A psalm of thanksgiving. Let all the earth sing in jubilation to the L-rd. Serve the L-rd with joy; come before Him with exultation. Know that the L-rd is G-d; He has made us and we are His, His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with gratitude, His courtyards with praise; give thanks to Him, bless His Name. For the L-rd is good; His kindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness is for all generations.

(Psalm 100)

