



Finding Joy in the Depths

Session 1 - Understanding, The Core of Joy

WALDER
FOUNDATION

POWERING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



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Finding Joy in the Depths

Session 1 - Understanding, The Core of Joy

Terminology

Simchah: happiness, meaningful joy

Chasidism: followers of a movement within orthodox Judaism founded by R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov

365 Negative Commandments: the 365 religious obligations to refrain from forbidden actions

Kabbalah: Jewish mystical tradition

Yetzer /hara: evil inclination

Hashgacha Pratis : Divine Providence, the manner in which G-d controls every aspect of existence

Dying al Kiddush Hashem: to die in a way that sanctifies G-d's name

Vocabulary

Vitality: the power to live or grow

Eradicate: to remove or destroy utterly



A. Goal Question

Why Is it important to live life with joy?



B. Read

Read Chap. 1 "Understanding, the Core of Joy" in the textbook "The Chassidic Approach to Joy".



C. Check your Understanding

Write all answers in full sentences in your notebook or in this workbook.

1. Copy the quote from each of these sources.

a) R. Shlomo of Karlin

- Student of the Maggid, as well as of Reb Aharon the Great of Karlin, whom he succeeded in 1772.
- Most of the Chassidic leaders of the next generation in the Lithuanian region were his disciples.
- Died Al Kiddush HaShem, stabbed by a Cossack while in the midst of the Amida prayer. His adopted son, Rabbi Asher, became the first Rebbe of Stolin.

b) The Baal Shem Tov

[illegible]

R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov

Also known by the acronym “BESHT”

- Founder of the chassidic movement.
- Originally kept his knowledge and saintliness hidden.
- On his thirty-sixth birthday, after six years of pressure from his long-time mentors, he began preaching openly.
- Ushered in a new era in Jewish thought. In the Besht's view, the simple blessing of the unlettered Jew was as holy as advanced Torah study; purity of intent was valued over dry achievement, joy; humility were to be admired, and even the simplest peasant could serve G-d through passionate prayer.

c) The Arizal

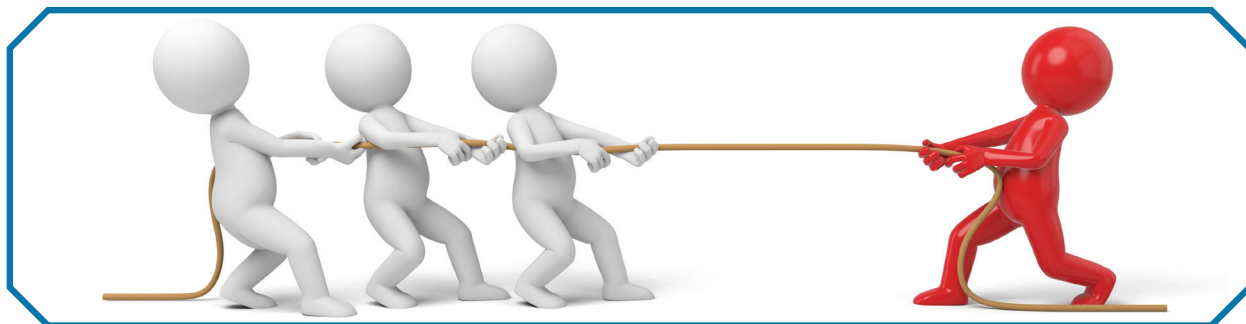
2. a) Why did these sages feel that depression causes more damage than sin?



Rabbi Isaac Luria [1534-1572]
also known by the acronym
"Ari" or "Arizal."

- Born in Jerusalem, died in Safed.
- One of the greatest kabbalists of all times
- He founded a new school in Kabbalistic thought

SAFED, ISRAEL - JUL 28, 2017: Hundreds of Jews come together to pray at the grave of the Arizal/Ari HaKadosh on the day of his commemoration of passing



b) How does joy help us to overcome our evil inclinations?

When a person is happy, he is stronger and can win the war against his evil inclination.

3. Read these sentences
and answer the questions on the next page.



The existence of the world depends on G-d.



He recreates the world every second.



Every event in the world; both good and bad is caused by G-d.



Everything that happens is part of His divine plan. He coordinates our lives.



G-d is good.

a) How does the awareness that G-d runs the world lead to joy?

b) How could sadness or anger be perceived as idolatry?

3. Read the story of R. Zusha and answer the questions below.

a) What was the question the person asked the Maggid of Mezritch?

Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli (1718-1800)

- Disciple of Rabbi DovBer of Mezritch
- One of the great Chassidic Rebbes and member of the circle of the Maggid of Mezeritch
- Did not write any books
- His teachings were collected in the Menorat Zahav, based on the memories of his students.
- Famed for his simple ways and lack of ego
- Forever remembered in the many tales of his awe of G-d and his deep love for His creations
- Known for his deep emotional approach towards prayer
- His Yahrtzeit is on 2 Shevat. He was buried beside his master and teacher, the Maggid of Mezeritch, in Anipoli.
- He was succeeded by his son Rabbi Tzvi Menachem Mendel.

b) What did the Maggid answer?

c) In what condition did the person find R. Zusha?

d) Why did R. Zusha never experience any suffering in his life?

Rabbi Dovber,

known as the Maggid

- Disciple of the Baal Shem Tov and the teacher of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi.
- He strengthened the Chassidism of his master, anchoring it firmly in Jewish thought and practice.





D. Think About it

Read the questions below and be ready to discuss with your mentor.

- Why is it important to live life with Joy?
- What is the effect of depression and anger in our lives? How does depression over the past affect the way we live in the future?

Can depression ever be productive?

- Explain the concept: There is only one force in the world and that is G-d. Why is everything that happens in our lives ultimately for the good?
- How does our perception of events affect the way we live?



E. Write and Apply

- Create an outline and write a half a page on one of the topics below. Organize your thoughts and use full sentences. Your mentor will correct the half page to help you to develop your writing skills. Alternatively, you can choose one of the questions above in section D. Apply the topic to events in your life. If possible, use some of the new vocabulary you learned.
- What do you want to achieve by taking this course? Why did you take it?
- Start a diary over the next 3 sessions in the back of your notebook. List events that are happening in your life right now and how you reacted to them. Then write how you would want to change your perspectives or reactions. If possible, use some of the new vocabulary you learned. Write jot-notes on your thoughts on any or all of the topics discussed in each session. You can add these reflections to your diary.



F. Extra Activities (Optional)

- Strategize with a classmate how to react positively and not negatively to events.
- Over the next week, try to react with joy to negative events and people. Did it make a difference?
- Write a poem, a song or create a painting about joy.



G. Extra Reading (Optional)

You can borrow the books listed at the beginning of this course from our loaning library on this subject. Alternatively, you can send us an email to get extra readings on any subject.



F. Audios (Optional)

You can listen to the following Audiofiles on your MP3 player or tablet through GTL.

- Attaining Happiness (R. Avraham Twerski)
- A Jewish Guide to Happiness (Rabbi Aryeh Weinstein)
- Five Words Leading To Happiness (Rabbi Dov Greenberg)
- Don't Worry Be Happy (R. Manis Friedman)
- Why Laughter is a Lifesaver (Rabb Abba Perlmutter)