

Breslov Essentials: Faithful Happiness

written by Yossi Katz
October 31, 2021



It is a great mitzvah to always be happy!

Often I hear people singing one of Rebbe Nachman's most famous quotes, "It is a great mitzvah to always be happy." (Likutey Moharan II, 24) But by studying the various opinions of which commandments are included in the list of 613, one can conclude that none of them are to be always joyous. So what did the Rebbe mean?

Interestingly, according to Reb Avrohom Chazan, one of the key figures in the transmission of Breslov Chassidut, this is actually the greatest mitzvah of the Torah! (Kochvei Ohr, Simcha V'Sasson 1) But what then does this mean, and how is being happy so important that it could be considered the

greatest mitzvah?

Joy is the central point of all mitzvot. This is because the purpose of observing mitzvot is *dveikut* or bonding with God, and there is no greater way to bond than by experiencing joy and happiness in one's relationship with God. Imagine a couple who have an excellent working relationship. Each day the husband makes sure to go to the grocery store and buy exactly what his wife asks of him. When he comes home, he takes the garbage out, hangs up his coat and even cleans up after himself. He does exactly what he has to, without ever feeling joy and happiness in his relationship with his wife. Do you think this couple has a good and healthy relationship?

It is incumbent on every Jew to feel tremendous joy and happiness, this is because Rebbe Nachman teaches that no matter how low a Jew has fallen, he or she must have at least one point of good. Every Jew, must have done some measure of good in their lifetime. The ensuing connection to God and its reward are so great, that even after all of the rectifications and soul-cleansing that a Jew must go through – it will all have been worth it. This can be said about even one good point! We read before every chapter of Pirkey Avot that every Jew has a place in the World to Come. The World to Come is the place where every Jew will enjoy an incredible closeness and delight with their Father in Heaven. If we were to experience just one moment of that pleasure, all of the enjoyments of this world combined would seem like total nothingness.

But what if I don't feel this joy?

Although this joy is mainly experienced as our reward in the next world, Rebbe Nachman wanted to teach us how to begin to live now with this happiness as well. The way to do this is by having *emunah* (faith) in our good points. We must believe that every time we do something good with our thoughts, speech, or actions; we are fulfilling the desire and wish of God. By doing this, we are forging a tremendous and infinite

connection with Him – the source of true joy. In our current physical world, we may not see this; nevertheless our souls are sensitive and knowing of our new connection. By having *emunah* in this process, we can achieve tremendous joy right now!

It is especially helpful to express in our own words gratitude for each good point, and to beseech God to help us truly believe in our intrinsic goodness and Godliness.