

Out to the Field – Deciding to be happy

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Continued from last week [here](#):

Likutey Moharan I:24 – Week 3

In order to follow my friend's suggestion, I stopped pleading to Hashem for help in hisbodedus and replaced it with thanking Him for the myriad of blessings that He sent me every day. Making this change did wonders for me. Previously, I had gone through the day making mental notes of things that troubled me; filing them away for the next morning when I could finally talk to Hashem about them. This meant that I was essentially starting off every day with complaints and addressing negative emotions.

Shortly after modifying my hisbodedus style, I watched [a video by Rabbi Elchonon Tauber](#) that really resonated with me since it dealt precisely with the issues that I had been focusing

on. In the video, Rabbi Tauber spoke about the need to make an effort to wake up each morning with great joy that Hashem has given him another day of life, as well as an effort to be happy throughout the day. Insightfully, Rabbi Tauber observed,

“Happiness does not come by itself. The only people who are happy are people who consciously decide to be happy.”

With this shot in the arm of *chizuk* (inspiration), I resolved to implement Rabbi Tauber’s suggestions since they related directly to the main *avodah* (spiritual practice) in the lesson from *Likutey Moharan* that I was focused on. I started going to bed each night with the intention of waking up with joy once my alarm clock went off. Instead of lethargically shuffling out of bed, I made a real effort each morning to say *Modeh Ani* upon arising with the gratitude a person would express to a surgeon who had just saved his life. It was a bit certainly forced in the beginning. And to be honest, I forgot to do it on a few occasions. However, as time went by, it became easier and easier and seemingly more authentic each time.

I also began to focus my morning *hisbodedus* on the idea of doing mitzvos with joy, as the Rebbe taught in *Likutey Moharan* I:24. Viewing each mitzvah as another opportunity to connect to Hashem, I thanked Him for the mitzvos I was already able to perform before *hisbodedus*, and thanked Him for the mitzvos that I anticipated performing following *hisbodedus*. Before performing any mitzvah, I tried to work myself into an exaggerated state of happiness. When putting on my tallis, I imagined it to be a happiness garment. And, when putting on tefillin, I imagined that each time I wrapped the strap another cycle around my arm I became even happier. Instead of viewing Shachris, Mincha, and Maariv as mere obligations, I forced myself to look at them as the happiest times of the day when I would get a chance to spend time with Hashem. To the reader, this all may sound very peculiar, however the Rebbe taught the following in *Sichos HaRan* #74 (translated in

English as [Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom](#)):

"You must pray with great joy, even if the happiness is forced. Happiness is always a virtue, but especially during prayer.

If you are disturbed and unhappy, you can at least put on a happy front. Deep down you may be depressed, but if you act happy, you will eventually be worthy of true joy.

This is true of every holy thing. If you have no enthusiasm, put on a front. Act enthusiastic, and the feeling will eventually become genuine. Understand this well."

Resolving to begin my prayers in a happy state of mind seemed to make a huge difference. Aside changing how I related to prayer, it even started changing the way that I prayed as well. I will tell you more about this next week.