

# Praying from the Place of Joy

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## **Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught...**

*When you're happy, it's easy to set aside some time to pray with a contrite heart. But when you're depressed, secluding yourself to speak with G-d is very hard to do.*

*That's why being happy is so important that you should even force yourself to be happy, if that's what it takes.*

*(The Empty Chair, p. 107\*)*

**What does this mean to me?**

In this lesson, Rebbe Nachman doesn't talk about joy as a goal in and of itself, but as the necessary internal environment for positive spiritual action. There are different kinds of contrition, or repentance—my contrition can be rooted in my feelings of inadequacy and negativity, or it can be the natural outgrowth of my sadness at feeling far from G-d, and my yearning to draw closer again. The verse tells us, "Strength and joy and in His place"—if I am depressed, it's a sure sign that I am not "in His place." By uplifting myself, however I can (in a kosher way, of course), my internal environment is attuned to G-d's reality of strength and joy. Then, even when I have confessions to make to G-d and regret to feel and express, my prayer is a positive force that moves me forward, rather than an exercise in wallowing in negativity.

**A prayer:**

Heavenly G-d,  
You know what harm my sins have done.  
Still, You assure me that there is great hope  
And no reason at all  
To feel depressed.  
For You have prepared for me  
A path back to You,  
One of encouragement and joy.  
When I search for and find  
The good things I have done,  
They become lights  
That shine and direct me  
Along that wonderful path.

([Between me and You](#), p. 218)

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