Dvar Torah from Rabbi Lew
PARSHAS CHAYEI SARA 5784

the lubavitch multi-academy trust
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When is a person most "happy"? When they feel a strong sense of self or when they lose themselves in some activity?

Another question about joy: Is it felt more when life is smooth, predictable, uneventful? Or is joy more about maintaining your equilibrium even when life has taken many unexpected turns?

This week's Parsha Chayei Sarah, which is literally "the life of Sarah". The holy Zohar interprets these words as saying that Sarah "owned life". She attached herself completely to life. She had the perfect balance, experienced true joy, and she thereby corrected (tikkun) the sin of Chava (Eve) and Adam.

Chava and Adam ate from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Zohar says that it was a vine. They took the grapes, made wine and drank it. They wanted to experience joy in Divine service.

"She (Chava) saw that the Tree was good…..". This knowledge meant acquiring a sense of self. Until then their world was purely G-d oriented. They saw their bodies as divine objects. Thus the knowledge was not an improvement; rather a setback , a sin.

Noach wanted to rectify this sin, through becoming drunk and unaware of his sense of self. But reaching this state by means of external substances is not real joy; it is an evasion, an escape from the real world.

Sarah was selfless and that is how she experienced joy. It had no negative side effects. As the Zohar says: Sarah descended (to impure Egypt) and ascended unscathed. On the contrary, she and Avraham were enriched by the experience.

Chayei Sarah is the life owned by Sarah. She then gave birth to Yitzchak, and she said "G-d has made laughter for me". Yitzchak means he will laugh, in the future tense.

Life has its downs and ups. By being selfless and letting the bigger picture be our main focus, we can "own" our lives, and experience real joy.

Shabbat Shalom!

Good Shabbos!

גוט שבת!

Assembly Notes
PARSHAS SHOFTIM 5784
Assembly Theme: Good thoughts, Good actions

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In 1942 Reb Yankel was with a group of Chassidim who fled to Kutais, Georgia during the War, to be far away from the German Nazis.

One Friday night he had the following dream. He was on a plane which flew to New York. They asked him where do you want to go and whom do you want to see. He answered that he wants to see the Rebbe. He was taken to a building with three floors. He asked which floor is the Rebbe on and he was told it's the second floor. He walked up and entered and saw an old frail man with a white beard. He assumed that this was the Rebbe. The man told him two things: First of all, Mazel Tov! Second, he told Reb Yankel to learn the Ma'amor (Chassidic Discourse which begins with the words והריקותי לכם ברכה Veharikosi Lochem Bracha (I will pour out a Blessing to you).

He then was awakened by his wife who said that she was having her baby; call the midwife!! A boy was born a few hours later.

The following Shabbos was the Bris and then a Kiddush and Farbrengen with everyone. He told the Chassidim there about his dream. The wise, elderly Chassidim told him that he did NOT see the Rebbe. We know what the Rebbe was, broad shouldered and tall. He had a red beard. He isn't an old crippled man in a wheelchair! And, furthermore, there is no Ma'amor at all that begins with the word Veharikosi! Dreams mean nothing!

Five years later, in 1947, he escaped the USSR with hundreds of Chabad families. He lived in France for a few years. That year our Rebbe visited France to meet his mother and take her to New York. Everyone saw that the Rebbe was a very great and special person, even though he was not yet Rebbe.

Reb Yankel Lipsker decided to ask the Rebbe about his dream five years previously. The Rebbe was excited and asked him exactly when he had the dream and asked him to repeat every detail. Then the Rebbe told him: there has never been a Ma'amor beginning Veharikosi, not by my father in law the Rebbe and not by any previous Rebbe. BUT, just around the time of your dream my father in law gave me a new Ma'amor of his starting with the word Veharikosi! Not every dream is authentic and holy; this one was. The Chassidim remember the Frierdikke Rebbe from twenty years ago. He suffered and became frail and disabled. But his power is stronger than ever!

Rabbi Berel Lipsker told this story at the farbrengen for his eightieth birthday. He said the Ma'amor beginning Veharikosi Lochem Brocha.

We can learn from this that connecting to the Rebbe is a spiritual experience , much deeper than just seeing. Especially today, when there are so many seforim in all languages with the Rebbe's teachings and vision. Besides many hundreds of tapes, pictures and videos.

גוט שבת!

KESIVAH VACHASIMAH TOVAH!