

# chosen words

## Personal Growth

### Really Happy

*Yes, it's really possible to be "b'simchah tamid."*

Be happy. Always. The Torah tells us that we should—in fact we must—strive always to be b'simchah. Yet, illness, grief and disappointment touch each and every life. So how is this continual state of simchah supposed to be maintained?

The answer is, by understanding what simchah really is. Contrary to popular belief, it doesn't mean you always feel like dancing. The Talmud tells us that a person is supposed to praise Hashem, b'simchah, in adversity just as in good times. Rashi explains that in this instance, simchah means "with a complete heart." A person, who accepts Hashem's judgment, even when it is painful to him, shows faith in the ultimate goodness and justice of Hashem's plan.

From the human perspective, suffering conflicts with our belief that Hashem is good. Adversity doesn't look, sound or feel good. But with a sense of simchah, we trust that the good is there, at a level we can't understand. Scientific breakthroughs have proven that our idea of reality is limited by what we know. For instance, there were two chemicals that, when combined, would simply not blend together. But when scientists brought those same chemicals

into outer space, outside the range of gravity, they blended completely. Of course, there was no way of knowing this until man achieved the ability to travel in space.

In the same way, events that seem to conflict with the concept of Hashem's kindness, when seen from another level, are perfectly harmonious with it. We only see conflict because our human intellect doesn't comprehend the higher

## Effective Prayer

### "My Lord"

*Fourth in a Series on Preparing for Prayer*

The first word we utter when beginning the Shmoneh Esrei is "Adon-ai," my Lord. In doing so, we call upon Hashem with the name that was first used by Avraham, the first person to ever pray to Hashem. Within that name is everything Avraham understood about the nature of Hashem and His continual involvement in every aspect of His creation.

## Torah Tools for Personal Growth

### Inspiration

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reality. But by having a firm trust in this concept, we can cope with what comes our way and fulfill the Torah's directive to live each moment of the life Hashem has given us, filled with true simchah.

*Adapted from "Let Us Make Man," by Rabbi Abraham Twerski, with permission from CIS Publications*

In Avraham's time, as in ours, theories abounded about creation and Hashem's place in it. There were those who believed in evolution—the universe just somehow happened.

There were those who believed in a Creator, who did his work and then let the laws of nature take care of the rest. And there were those who believed that there was indeed a G-d who ran the world, but He was a top-level executive whose interests were confined to big events like earthquakes and volcanoes.

Then there was Avraham, the first human being to perceive the personal, loving, continually creative G-d. He knew that Hashem's involvement in

## Better Relationships

### Going Off On A Tangent

*Fourth in a Series on Loshon Hora-Free Living*

Most people have a sixth sense for when a conversation is heading into loshon hora.

There are certain people who you know to have particular sore subjects, and when those subjects come up, you know loshon hora is likely to be waiting around the next conversational bend. But it may well be possible to take hold of the situation and steer the subject in another direction. One way to do that is to introduce a different tangent of the subject the speaker is introducing:

Your mother, who believes your brother-in-law spends too lavishly, begins what seems likely to be a new indictment: "Did you see David's new car? I wonder how..."

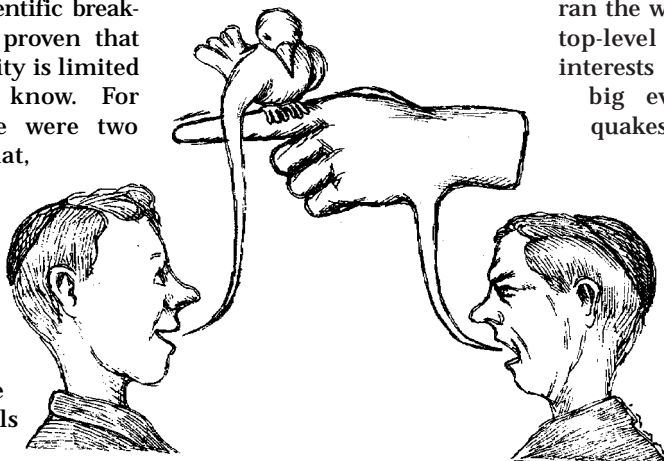
"Oh, he's back from vacation? Do you know if he's going to be home because I need to speak to him?"

Another example: Your neighbor, who had a run-in with the owner of the local grocery store, begins to relate, "I was in ABC Grocery today, and...."

"I bought some apple juice on sale there last week. Do you know if they still have it?"

The idea is to move quickly and firmly to a new topic. Most likely, by the time the topic that you've

*con't on back*



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# A Worrier's Reality Check

Third in a Six-Part Series on Worry

Worry damages a person's spirituality and destroys happiness by preoccupying his or her mind with depressing thoughts. When you worry, you become a prisoner of your own imagination. Worry is a habit of thought, and like any other habit, it can be broken.

Rather Than Envisioning Disaster, Imagine Solutions and Ways of Coping.

When we worry, we focus our thoughts on worst-case scenarios and we suffer tremendously over the possibility of some imagined occurrence, one that may never take place. If you want to stop worrying, look carefully at reality. Is it possible that you have jumped to a shaky conclusion?

Unfortunately, sometimes troubles are truly imminent. But in some of those cases, there is a very real possibility that a solution will present itself. Instead of imagining

potential disasters, visualize what the solutions might look like. The unemployed man might get a job tomorrow. The sick person might respond to a new medication—if not tomorrow, then perhaps the next day. By clearing your mind of worry, you free it to find creative solutions.

In a more serious situation, the solution may be slow in coming, or may not come at all. But even if there is no solution, you are still in control of one aspect of the situation—your reaction to it. Worry leads you to imagine that you'll "fall apart." Imagine instead that you'll react with inner strength and an accepting heart. Think of someone you know who has approached a problem similar to yours with an attitude you admire, and imagine doing the same. Though your worry may seem as real as stone and granite, when you set your mind to dealing

with the situation, you find that worry is less substantial than thin air.

*Adapted from "Gateway to Happiness," by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, with permission from the author*

## My Lord con't from front

creation is ongoing, all-inclusive and constant. He knew that the same Power that brought "something from nothing" creates our world anew for us every day.

All this is contained in Avraham's revolutionary name for Hashem, "my Lord," the first word we speak in Shmoneh Esrei.

When You Begin to Pray:

Focus on Avraham's meaning of the word, and connect to the G-d who renews us and our world, guides our lives and blesses us with good. Then call out to "Adon-ai" and set your tefillah off in the right direction.

*Adapted from "Shmoneh Esrei," by Rabbi Avraham Feuer, with permission from Mesorah Publications*

## Tangent con't from front

introduced has been discussed, the old topic will have evaporated. Move quickly and you can assure that the speakers will not have gotten too deeply into the topic and its intricacies.

*Adapted from "Strategies," an upcoming book to be published by the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation*

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# The Last Bit of Effort

On 2-2-2 we re-ignite our wonder at the splitting of the Red Sea. Only Hashem's hand could have performed this miracle, but it was a man's heart that set it in motion. That man was Nachshon Ben Aminadav. Like all the B'nei Yisrael, he saw how dire the situation was. The Egyptians were in close pursuit, and certain death closed off every avenue of escape. Yet, Nachshon was certain that Hashem would not lead His people to destruction. He waded into the sea, into ever deepening water, until at the last possible moment, the seas parted.

In our times, miracles of epic proportions are in far shorter supply. But miracles do happen every day, and these, like the splitting of the sea, are set in motion by our own willingness to use every last shred of effort to perform Hashem's will, and the faith that when we're "up to our necks," Hashem will extend His helping hand and carry us the rest of the way.

—CCHF

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