

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CHAUTAUQUA

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Historical Sketches – Week 6 – 2021

1. "The ability to be joyous, by discerning the good and joyous within every experience, is considered as a biblical command!" (Kesser Shem Tov)
2. *Serve G-d with joy.* (Psalms 100:2)
3. One should not stand up to pray while dejected...but only while still rejoicing in the performance of a mitzvah. (Talmud, Tractate Brochos 31a)
4. The Arizal, once said that all that he achieved – the fact that the gates of wisdom and divine inspiration were opened for him – was a reward for his observance of mitzvot with tremendous, limitless joy! (Introduction to Charedim, Tnai Hamitzvot, Tnai 4.)
5. The commandments of G-d are upright, causing the heart to rejoice. psalms 19:9)
6. A person must always be happy. (Tzava'at Harivash sec. 110.)
7. All your actions should be for the sake of Heaven.(Ethics of our fathers 2:12)
8. "I've become aware . . . that [you] are saying that it is necessary to fast [to achieve penance]. My innards tremble from this declaration. Furthermore, I command – and joining me [in this injunction] are the celestial angels and the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shechinah – that you should not, G-d forbid, be involved with this, for this is an action of depression and dejection..." (Excerpt from a letter in the besht's handwriting is in the Chabad library).
9. If tears open up the [heavenly] gates, joy absolutely demolishes them! (Toldos Yaakov Yosef)
10. "Because you did not serve G-d, your G-d, with joy and gladness of heart, from an abundance of everything...you will serve your enemies in hunger, thirst, and nakedness, and in want of everything." (Deuteronomy 28:47)-
 - a. **RASHI:** when [you had an] abundance of everything: when you still had all good things.
 - b. **ARIZAL:** You did not serve G-d with a joy greater than that caused by an abundance of everything.... (Quoted in Shaloh, Asarah Maamarot, Maamar 3:4. See Tanya Chapter 26)
11. Bear in mind regarding the Creator, that 'the whole earth is full of His glory,' and His Shechinah (Presence) is constantly at your side... Always be joyful. Think and believe with perfect faith that the Shechinah is at your side and watches over you. You look at the Creator, blessed be He, and the Creator, blessed be He, looks at you." (Tzavaat Harivash 137)
12. ...then they will say among the nations, 'G-d has done great things with [the Jews]' Indeed, G-d has done great things with us; we were happy. (Psalms 126:2-3)
13. Rabbi Yaacov Yosef of Polnoye commented: It seems to me that this is one meaning of the verse, "It is not good that man is alone"—because then he would never recognize his faults. Therefore, "I will make for him a helper against him"—meaning that G-d provides us other people that oppose us, so that we might see that we have a trace of whatever ills we see in them.
14. "For you (the people of Israel) shall be a desirable land, says G-d" (Malachi 3:12). Just as the greatest explorers will never uncover the limits of the great and valuable resources which the Almighty has placed within the earth, neither will anyone ever discover the limits of the great treasures which lie buried within a Jew - G-d's "desirable land." (Hayom Yom, 17 Iyar)

From 'Thirty-Six Aphorisms of the Baal Shem Tov' (Chabad.org):

15. Cleaving to G-d is the master-key that opens all locks. Every Jew, including the simplest, possesses the ability to cleave to the words of Torah and prayer, thereby achieving the highest degrees of unity with G-d. (Baal Shem Tov)
16. An angel of G-d appeared to [Moses] in a flame of fire amidst the thorn-bush; and he saw that, behold, and the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed" (Exodus 3:2). It is in the simple folk - the "lowly" thorn-bush - that this insatiable Divine flame is found, for theirs is an unquenchable thirst for G-dliness, Torah and its commandments.
17. And Moses said: Let me move from here..." (ibid. 3:3). Even a completely righteous individual such as Moses is not to be content with his spiritual achievements; he, too, must constantly ascend from "here" to "there."
18. The Baal Shem Tov was very fond of light, and said, "Or (light) is the numerical equivalent of raz ('secret'). Whoever knows the 'secret' in everything can bring illumination." (Hayom Yom, 6 Elul)
19. It is written: "When you will see the donkey of your enemy collapsing under its burden, and you are inclined to refrain from aiding him, you shall nevertheless aid him" (Exodus 23:5). The Baal Shem Tov applied this instruction to the body and the material self (chamor, "donkey", also means "materiality"). Initially - the Torah is saying - you may see your body as your enemy, resisting your soul's objectives, collapsing under the "burden" of the mitzvot. You may therefore be inclined to fight the body by denying its needs and mortifying it. Says the Torah: You must aid your soul's "enemy". Purify the body, refine it, do not break it. (Hayom Yom, 28 Shvat)
20. Seek peace and pursue it. (Psalms 34:15) - One must seek and pursue means of making peace and establishing harmony between the material world and the G-dly life-force that vitalizes it.
21. The earth shall rest a sabbath to G-d. (Leviticus 25:2) - Give earthiness a rest; permeate it with the sabbath of spirituality and holiness.
22. It is written, "You stand upright this day before the L-rd your G-d" (Deuteronomy 29:9). "This day" refers to Rosh Hashanah which is the day of judgment. Yet you remain standing firmly upright, meaning you will be vindicated in judgment.
23. On Rosh Hashanah of the year 5507 I performed, by means of oath, an elevation of soul [to the higher spiritual realms], as known to you, and saw wondrous things I had never seen before. That which I saw and learned there is impossible to convey in words, even face to face.

When I returned to the lower Garden of Eden [one of the levels of the abode of departed souls], I saw innumerable souls, both living and dead, some whom I knew and others whom I did not....

All of them beseeched and petitioned me unceasingly: "Because of the glory of your Torah, G-d granted you greater understanding to perceive and know these things. Ascend with us, so that you can be our help and support."

Because of the great joy that I saw among them, I decided to ascend with them. Due to the great danger involved in ascending to the supernal universes, I asked my master [Achiya the Shilonite] to come with me, as I had never before ascended to such a high level. I ascended from level to level until I entered the chamber of the Mashiach...

I asked the Mashiach: "When will the Master come?", and he answered: "By this you shall know:

In the time when your teaching will become public and revealed in the world, and your wellsprings will burst forth to the farthest extremes...

(Letter the *Baal Shem Tov* wrote to his brother-in-law in the Holy Land, Rabbi Gershon of Kitov (Published in 1781 as an appendix to *Ben Porat Yosef* [p.128a])

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