

Seize the Moment

By: Dr. Leah Adams

I had the pleasure of attending the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation Video, “The Best is Yet To Come: How to live with Simchas HaChaim” in honor of the Yartzheit of Rachel Imeinu. The messages presented are always powerful ones and this year focused on a favorite topic of mine, simchas hachaim. As “curator” of a costume Gemach, simcha is my mantra. I like to summarize main points when I go to a shiur because this makes it easier for me to remember. Rebbetzin Tehilla Jaeger spoke of experiencing the simcha of the moment in **time** and Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller spoke of experiencing the simcha of the **person**. Rabbi Zev Leff spoke of our ability to enhance the simcha of the **Place**, Eretz Yisroel, through our tzedaka. That’s the nice neat package of the shiur now let us unwrap it to really understand its beauty and impact on our lives.

Rebbetzin Jaeger pointed out that we must learn to experience the simcha of the moment, unfettered by our thoughts of could’ve, would’ve, should’ve. If, as I am engrossed in the mitzvah of Challah, I obsess about the fact that my living room is not spotless, then I have lost the opportunity to enjoy that moment in time. That exact moment cannot be duplicated and so we should revel in it to our fullest. My husband often reflects on a similar point. He marvels that all three weeks between 17 Tamuz and 9 B’Av we are in mourning. The mourning intensifies until reaching its most extreme level on Tisha B’av. Then, poof, the night after 10 B’Av we get invited to weddings and dance and rejoice. How strange this seems when we think about it. Yet, my husband has taught me, when Hashem expects us to be sad, we are sad, and when He deems it time to rejoice, we sing and celebrate. We brush off the dirt from the ashes, and shine our shoes-all based on the will of Hashem and how He has endowed the moment.

Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller raised a point that is sometimes more difficult because it relies on our ability to rise above a common human trait of being judgmental of ourselves and others. Let’s say we are wronged by someone and have to have other dealings with this individual. Rebbetzin Heller reminds us to seek out, scrupulously if necessary, some redeeming quality possessed by this

individual. We should then focus on this one trait in our future dealings with the hope that this will change our view and method of dealing with, this person. We need to use these same rose colored glasses in viewing ourselves as well.

The combination of the messages that these two wise women shared helps us in our acceptance of our role in Hashem's world. Right now, at this moment, (hopefully) my "job" is to write an inspiring article. If I do not learn to enjoy this moment, and enjoy the effort that I, the person, have been given to use, then I am missing the opportunity to enjoy my place in the World. When I recognize that I (the universal "I"), a unique and special person, bounded by my own set of talents and limitations, have been given the opportunity to elevate this unique and special yet bounded moment in time, then happiness knows no bounds!

PS Well, there's more to write but the electricity is already flickering as the storm gets worse. I guess that's the sign to send this in to the editor already!

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