

SEASON 2



SESSION 3: HAPPINESS

OLAMI MENTORSHIP

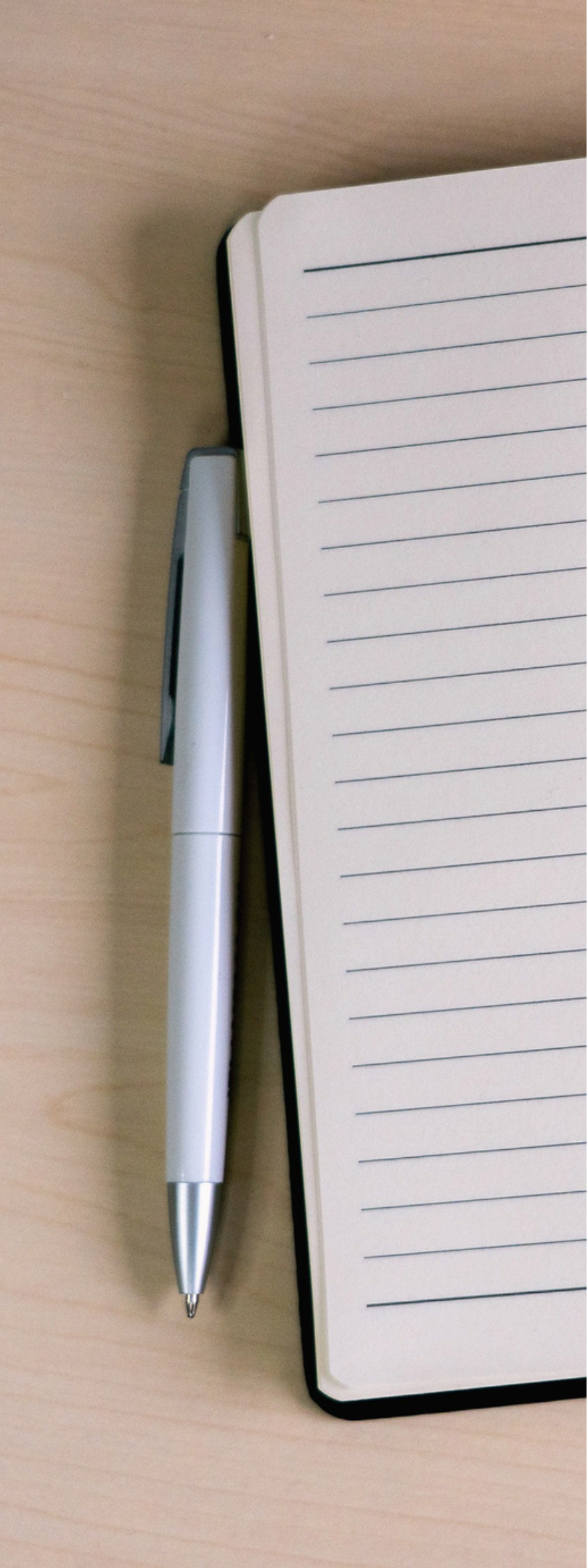
DEAR MENTEE AND MENTOR,

Perhaps the single most universal goal of human existence is to be happy. Yet, it is fascinating to note that most people struggle when asked to give a clear and concise definition of happiness or simcha.

Even more so for many, happiness often feels like a goal that is a moving target and one can spend an entire life pursuing happiness and never feel like one has attained complete happiness.

At the same time, simcha is such a central point in our avodas Hashem, that the Torah cautions that serving Hashem without joy can trigger all types of tragedies and mishaps.

In this session you will have the opportunity to brainstorm your personal understanding and definition of happiness, Chazal's understanding of real joy, and a few tools to shift one's perspective and thereby enjoy a happier life.



REMINDERS:

- Check-in: How was your week?
- Journaling: The journal is a space to track progress and growth throughout this journey.
- Set a time for your next meeting.

Did you know?

The largest class at Harvard University (1200+) was not poly-sci, neurosciences, or even entrepreneurship in emerging economies.

Fascinatingly, it was Positive Psychology or the science of happiness, and it was taught by an Israeli professor by the name of Tal Ben Shahr. This was a clear indicator that above all, America's brightest clearly understood that happiness was a top priority.

No different perhaps than the sentiments of the founding fathers of the United States of America in trying to create a utopian state with life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.





PART 1: HAPPINESS DEFINED

1. Have you or your friends ever sat down for some real reflective time to define happiness and figure out a practical way to attain it? If not, why not? Isn't happiness such an important goal?
2. Please take a moment to share your personal definitions of happiness?
3. On a scale of 1-10 with 1=Sad and 10=Nirvana, what is your happiness factor?
4. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov
It is a mitzvah (commandment) to be happy all the time! מצוה גדולה להיות בשמחה תמיד
5. Can you identify with Rabbi Nachman's statement? Can one truly be happy "all the time"?



6. Rabbi Akiva Tatz, Happiness: A Torah Approach, audio class

The real definition of happiness is the response you feel when you are:

1. Moving toward a meaningful destination
2. Along a correct path
3. Against resistance, and
4. You are making progress

7. Please take some time to analyze the above (Torah's) definition of happiness.

8. Can you plug your life into the above formula?

PART 2: THE BENEFITS OF HAPPINESS

1. Imagine that you had the ability to somehow take your personal happiness up a few solid notches, where would you benefit most?

2. Health

“We know that up to 80% of visits to primary care doctors are due to conditions that are caused or exacerbated by unmanaged stress,” “Being happy doesn’t just make us feel better, it improves our health. It helps us eat healthier, be more active and sleep better.”

Because happiness leads to healthier behaviors, it helps stave off high blood pressure and excess body fat, resulting in lower risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease.

-Dr. Francoise Adan, director of the Connor Integrative Health Network of University Hospitals in Cleveland



3. Spiritual

Happiness is a lofty trait. When an individual is happy, he is in a state of completion. Through this he can fully experience Torah which is the ultimate completion of man.

כי השמחה מדה גדולה, כי כאשר אדם הוא בשמחה, הוא בשלמות, ועל ידי זה מקבל התורה שהיא שלימות האדם

- Maharal Derech Chaim (דרך חיים, אבות י')

4. Productivity

An extensive study into happiness and productivity has found that workers are 13% more productive when happy.

- Oxford University Sa

5. Longevity

Happy people have an 11% to 15% longer life span, on average.

- PNAS

PART 3:

ACQUIRING HAPPINESS

1. Mindfulness

Studies show that mindfulness increases one's happiness factor by 10% on average.

The Hebrew word בשמחה means being in the state of happiness has the same letters as the word מחשבה which means mindfulness.

The Hebrew word for being happy is שמח which can be split into two words שם מח meaning placing one's brain or in other words being mindful.

2. Gratitude

World renowned Psychologist UC Davis's Robert Emmons, discovered that proactively taking time to focus on the gifts of life can increase one's happiness factor by up to 25%.

Who is rich? The one who appreciates what he has

אִיזְהוּ עָשִׁיר,
הַשֹּׂמֵחַ בְּחִלְקוֹ,

- Ethics of Our Fathers 4:1

פרקי אבות ד:א





3. Giving

Elizabeth Dunn, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of British Columbia, gave participants either \$5 or \$20 and told one group to spend it on other people and the other group to spend it on themselves. The results showed that people who were told to spend on others were significantly happier than those who spent the money on themselves, regardless of the dollar amount.

Giving others pleasure provides us with a tremendous source of pleasure. Giving pleasure gives our life purpose and meaning, because we see the positive impact we can make.

- R. Noach Weinberg

4. Bringing G-d into One's Life

A 2019 Pew Research Poll found that people who live with G-d in their life were over 10% happier on average.

Once a person's intellect reaches a clear recognition of the truth of God's existence, he is immediately filled with a boundless, ecstatic joy...

- Chazon Ish Emuna
Ubitachon 2:9

כאשר זכה שכל
האדם לראות
אמיתות מציאותו ית',
מיד נכנס בו שמחת
גיל אין קץ.

5. What are some practical takeaways from this session?
Was there any idea or concept that was novel to you?

6. What are a few small but real steps that you can take to increase your day-to-day happiness?

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