

שמחה

Simcha
lit. joy

Find Pleasure in Life

The Jewish approach encourages us to balance striving to repair the world with a sense of humor and contentment with what life provides.

We can't possibly be happy all the time. After all, things happen that elicit sadness. What we can do – even from a position of sadness – is strive to respond to life's circumstances with an attitude of openness and gratitude that can lead us closer to a deep joy.

“Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement.get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.”

– Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

“Most Jews still think that fasting is more righteous than feasting. Yet the Talmud suggests that in the world to come a person will have to stand judgment for every legitimate pleasure in this life that was renounced.”

– Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg

Questions for Conversation and Reflection

1. What life experiences have left you in a state similar to that of ‘radical amazement’ that Rabbi Heschel describes?
2. Is there anything in your life that you have observed makes you happy unconditionally?