

A Pesach Message From Our Executive Director

Rabbi Shaya Mintz

“Jewish Joy”



For as long as I can remember, scientists and mental health professionals have been searching for the most elusive commodity. Experiments, questionnaires and intensive study on the topic have brought many to different conclusions. Each time a study is completed of man's universal quest, it is excitedly shared in medical journals and social media platforms. Happiness or Joy. What is the secret for lasting contentment? Everyone I know has to face challenges. Whether at the office or at home. Some with strained relationships and others with health or financial worries. Is it possible for someone to be completely happy or joyous?

King David in his writings shares with us the following advice. "The mitzvot of G-d gladden the heart." (*Psalms 19/9*) Here I believe is the answer. Mitzvot! G-d created us and the world around us. There are so many different ways to lead one's life. How do I set my goals? What is greatness? What is success? Life circumstances are different for each and every individual. He has given every person the opportunity for greatness. We each have been given exactly what we need to navigate this world and succeed. The world is beautiful and expansive. However, the world around us is constantly changing. How can we even set our sights on a goal?

The very first time G-d introduces himself to Moshe in Exodus He says, " you will take the nation out of Egypt to serve Me on the mountain." This refers to the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. The purpose of the liberation from Egypt was to serve G-d. Is this liberation? Instead of slavery to Pharaoh now they will have to serve G-d! Here lies the secret to a life full of contentment. Knowing one's goal in life and having a strategy to get there is what brings joy. A Jew's goal is to develop a relationship with his Creator. The way to do that is by performing the mitzvot. The mitzvot are the tools which we use to create that relationship. The world may be changing but the tools remain the same. This is what brings every Jew lasting happiness. There may be challenges along the way but that does not negate one's journey towards his life's goal. The journey and its challenges bring joy. Mitzvot and one's connection with G-d bring one to realize their potential, and as King David taught us, that is life's great pleasure!