



## When Adar enters, joy increases

Abstract: Joy on Purim, and in general.

- The connection between joy and the Purim holiday.
- How does joy help in dealing with day-to-day situations, and how can we adopt a positive, optimistic approach?

Why is it that when Adar enters, joy increases?

- Where in the Book of Esther does joy appear, and what are we joyful about? (Reading of verses from the Book)
- How do we create joy? Introduction to the holiday's precepts and their contribution to joy.

Tonight We Must Rejoice

- Joy as a way of dealing with situations in reality.
- Examining expressions of joy that appear; the value of joy.

My joy

- Analysis of day-to-day situations in which joy assists in coping, and how we can increase joy in ourselves and among our friends.





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## Purim ID card

**Date:** The 14th of Adar (14-15 in walled cities)

**Reason for the holiday/event:** Rescue of the Jews by Esther and Mordechai in the Kingdom of Achashverosh from Haman's intention of annihilating them.

**Figures:** Queen Esther, Mordechai the Jew, King Achashverosh, Haman the Villain.

**Holiday precepts (*mitzvot*):** Reading the Book (*Megillah*), feast-banquet, sending gifts to one another, gifts to the poor.

**Customs:** Dressing up, Adloyada – masquerade procession, making noise with noisemakers upon mention of the name Haman, making and eating hamentashen, Purim Spiel comic play.



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## Why is it that when Adar enters, joy increases?

### Course of the lesson

1. Question: Why is it that when Adar enters, joy increases? How is Purim joyful?
2. Mark (each student on a page of his own) the word JOY in the following sentences or words synonymous with joy, such as merry and glad.

(15) When Mordechai left the king's presence, wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large gold crown, and a purple robe of fine linen; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was merry.

(16) The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor.

(17) In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating...

Meanings of words: *hur* – fine white cloth; *ateret* – wreath, crown; *tachrich* – covering, wrapping; *butz* – fine linen, byssus; merry – joyful; light – light of joy; honor – good; edict – law; feasting – a festive meal with alcoholic beverages.

(17) This happened on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

(18) The Jews in Sushan, however, had assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth, and then on the fifteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy. (19)

That is why rural Jews—those living in villages—observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a day for giving presents to each other.

Meanings of words: Assembled – gathered and organized for war; rural Jews living in villages – without walls.





(21) To establish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, each and every year: (22) As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

Meanings of words: Establish this among them – to observe the holiday; sorrow – sadness; mourning – sadness over death / injury; poor – people in need.

### Questions:

3. What words synonymous with joy did you find in the passages? (Merry, light, gladness)
4. How many times do the word joy and synonymous words appear in the passages? What do we learn from the repetition of the word joy?
5. According to the passages (and what we know about the Book of Esther story), what are the Jews happy about?
6. How is this joy expressed? What actions?
7. What reasons for joy do you know on the holidays? And in day-to-day life?





## Holiday Precepts and Joy

### Course of the lesson:

- We shall explain: We have seen that joy is a main aspect of the holiday and story of the Book. How are you joyful or make others joyful? For example, on a birthday or party, what is done in order to be joyful? (Food, song, gifts)

Similarly, on the holiday we are ordered to do things that increase joy.

- We shall ask: What are the four precepts (mitzvoth) of the holiday? The four Ms (Mems) Reading the Book of Esther (*Megillah*); feast-banquet (*Mishte*); sending gifts to one another (*Mishloach Manot*); gifts to the poor (*Matanot La'evyonim*).
- We shall explain: *Hazal* count four precepts that apply on Purim:
  - Reading the Book of Esther. On the holiday eve and on its morning, as part of publicizing the miracle, and giving thanks for the rescue. Women too are obligated to read the Book (despite the fact that it is counted among the time-dependent positive precepts, since they too were saved in the Purim miracle; or, since the main miracle was performed by a woman).
  - Purim feast - banquet and celebration. As written in the Book, the days of Purim were designated as “days of feasting and joy”. In the Talmud (*Megillah* tractate) it says that a person must feast on the holiday, including wine; it also says that a person must get drunk to the point where he cannot distinguish between damned Haman and blessed Mordechai. There are differing opinions on the question of the extent to which inebriation is obligated, and there are adjudicators who determined that this precept has been removed from Jewish law. Some claim that the precept is valid but there is no need to become completely drunk rather just enough to induce sleep and while sleeping a person cannot distinguish between damned Haman and blessed Mordechai (Hameiri).





- Mishloach manot (gifts of food and drink) sent to one another. From the text of the Book of Esther “gifts of food and drink sent to one another”, where the word “gifts” (*manot*) is plural and “one another” is singular. *Hazal* deduced from this that it is incumbent on each person to send at least two gifts, to at least one person.
- Gifts to the poor. According to Jewish law, one should give at least two gifts to two poor people, or a sum of money to enable purchase of available foods. The Rambam notes that it is better that a person be more generous giving gifts to the poor than feeding himself at his feast.
- We shall ask: What is the connection between the precepts of the holiday and joy?  
How do the precepts increase joy? (See annex for teachers)

Reading the Book – to remind us of the rescue, and the reason for the holiday;

Banquet / feast – the pleasures of the table, feasting together;

Sending gifts – to make friends happy with gifts;

Gifts to the poor – to bring joy to the poor, and the joy of giving;





## Tonight We Must Rejoice – joy as a way of coping

Read the following songs and classify the marked words into two categories: Words connected with joy, and antonymous to it.

### Lend a hand

Lyrics: Avigdor Hameiri

Music: Mordechai Zeira

Lend a hand, close your eyes,  
Purim is upon us, let's forget  
about everything.

If you have a **pain**, trample it  
with your feet,

Open your mouth and **sing**  
**aloud**:

Aha! Aha! We'll all go crazy  
We'll see, we'll live, despite all  
the **hardship**.

Aha! Aha! We'll do what we  
want.

We'll live, and we'll see  
**miracles and wonders**.

### Meanings of words:

Ramsehu - step on and destroy it

Heftseinu - what we want, or  
desire

Nevatseya - we will do

Al af - despite, even though...

Tla'ot - hardship

### Happy Song

Lyrics: Yaakov Orland

Music: Mordechai Zeira

Even if our head is bowed  
and sadness surrounds us –  
Come on, let's be aflame  
with the joy that is in us.

Hey, Hey

come on, let's become filled  
with joy, joy, as full as the eye

Hey, hey

Sing higher and higher

let the wine rise and burn!

let the wine rise and burn!

Hey, Hey...

Rise and burn like fire  
and light us up with power!

Woe to he who despairs,  
tonight we must rejoice!

Hey, Hey

the night shall redeem

any man, any man with a soul in him

Hey, hey

each man in Israel

has a spark of consolation in him!

a spark of consolation in him!

Hey, Hey...

### Meanings of words:

Bowed – bent over

Surrounds us – wrapped around us

Redeem – save

Consolation – give comfort, relief



Questions:

1. Which words are associated with joy and which to sadness and hardship? Which are there more of?
2. From among the words that describe hardship, what do we know about the state of the people in the songs?
3. What do the two songs have in common?
4. How will these people overcome their difficult situation? Who will help them?
5. What is the meaning of “Purim is upon us, let’s forget about everything”? How does Purim help to forget? What is worth forgetting, and how does this help?
6. What does “woe to he who despairs” mean? What’s wrong with despairing? How can joy and song keep people from despairing?
7. Can joy and laughter help in overcoming difficult situations? Try to think of examples of such situations from your life.

**Summary**

Joy is what we feel when good, funny and happy things happen. In the month of Adar we are, according to tradition, supposed to rejoice. This is a bit strange, because how can you plan joy? However, both in tradition and in daily life we see that joy can be encouraged and strengthened if we do joyful things like singing, dancing, wearing costumes and giving gifts. This is what we do on Purim, and we can do it on other days as well.

## Joy in everyday life

### Course of the lesson:

1. Introduction: In our previous activity we saw that joy can be a good way of dealing with adversity – with a short break from the difficult things we struggle with, a respite and recess in which to recharge and then continue, or by encouraging a positive attitude in order not to despair with the hardship. In this activity we shall try to find cases and opportunities in which joy may be applied in our lives, and how to achieve it.
2. Dealing with situations – work in groups – class divided into groups Each group receives a case description, and needs to think how joy can help, and how to increase our own joy or that of our fellow man.

Your friend Shira is a little sad because her mother has gone away for a few weeks on a family visit abroad, and she misses her. How can you cheer her up?

- \* What will you do and what will you suggest she do in order to ease her longings?
- \* What will you do in order to help Shira see the positive (good) side of the situation?

Your friend Gil was not successful in an assignment his teacher gave him in class. There will soon be an exam and he is near despair with regard to passing it.

- \* How will you cheer him up?
- \* How will you convince him not to give up and continue trying?

You built a nice model for science class. Your little brother accidentally knocked it down and broke it. You know that it was unintentional yet you are angry. You have only a short time to repair it, and you're not sure you'll have time.

- \* How will you get over the anger?
- \* What will cheer you up?
- \* What will help you concentrate on repairing rather than on anger and disappointment?

Mom has a birthday, just when Dad has reserve duty (*miluim*). You know that Mom is disappointed that she won't be able to celebrate her birthday with Dad, and she also worries about Dad.

- \* What will you do in order to encourage Mom and cheer her up?
- \* How will you distract her and keep her from worrying?

3. Each group shall present its suggestions, either verbally or by dramatization.
  - o What do all the groups have in common? What can we do in order to employ joy in everyday life?
  - o How are we affected when we make someone else happy?
  - o We can read the poem Circles of Happiness by Dasi Rabinovich or the explanation on medical clowns and explain how laughter and joy can help deal with difficult situations.



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## Circles of Happiness / Dasi Rabinovich

Each and every person has a circle in his heart, a circle of happiness.

Sometimes it's a small circle, but sometimes it can grow and grow...

When the circle is big to bursting,

It sends small circles to hidden places in the body, places that sometimes hurt.

The more small circles there are, the fewer places there are that hurt.

There are some people whose circle of happiness is small and we have the job –

of helping it grow!

Surely, you're asking, "How?"

Each one of us can find a way –

We can bring a piece of candy,

or give a flower,

sing a song,

draw a picture,

Or even simply say "Good morning, how are you today?"

But the most important thing is to do it with joy, with all of your heart.

May you always create lots of circles of happiness for others;

And by doing this, your circle will grow too.



### Clown Care (Wikipedia)

Clown Care (also known as hospital clowning) is a program in hospitals and medical centers involving visits from specially trained clowns colloquially called "clown doctors". They employ the therapeutic effect of humor to improve the quality of life, functioning and condition of patients.

Professional clown doctors began working in hospitals in New York City in 1986 as part of a program called the Big Apple Circus Clown Care Unit, which was started by Michael Christensen. Christensen coined the phrase: "If patients won't come to the circus, the circus will come to them". Clown Doctors programs now operate in every state in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Israel, South Africa, Hong Kong, Brazil, and all over Europe.

Clown Doctors attend specifically to the psycho-social needs of the hospitalized patients. They distract the patients from painful or frightening procedures, and help them adapt to the hospital routine. The atmosphere of fun and laughter help patients momentarily forget their illness and relieve the stress they are under. Clown Doctors employ skills such as: Magic, balloon sculpting, storytelling, etc., to provide children with doses of fun that help them deal with the range of emotions they may experience while in hospital: fear, anxiety, loneliness, and boredom.

The healing power of humor and laughter has been proven in several studies to assist in combating stress and reducing pain by releasing endorphin (the body's natural painkiller), boosting the immune system by increasing the level of T cells & lowering serum cortisol levels, and helping promote a positive outlook, thus helping people to cope with difficult situations. In addition, it has been proven that humor increases the chances of enduring various medical procedures, and speeding up the healing process.



## Summary

We have seen that joy is strongly related to the Purim holiday. Many of the holiday's precepts are directed towards increasing joy among us and our surroundings. Joy is a way of coping, not just on the holiday. We may take a joyful and positive (optimistic) view of difficult things that happen to us, and mainly cheer those around us when they encounter hardship.



## Teacher's Annex

# On Purim one is commanded to be joyful and forget all worries

### Joy of Purim

The precept (*mitzvah*) of joy is the common denominator of all Purim precepts. Joy is the most outstanding motif in the last chapters of the Book (8–9). All Purim holiday precepts are designed to create and cultivate joy.

Purim precepts: reading the Book (*Megillah*), feast-banquet, sending gifts to one another, gifts to the poor.

### Reading the Book

The most important precept of Purim is reading the Book; all are obligated to hear the reading of the Book – men and women alike. The Book is read twice: On Purim eve, and on the following day. The Book is read again during the day, because every time observing the holiday for generations is mentioned, the reference is to days: And these days are remembered and done in each and every generation (Esther 9:28). The Hallel is not read on Purim, since reading the Book is considered as the Hallel.

### Feast and joy (banquet)

The aim of the feast is to cause physical pleasure; such a precept does not exist in other holidays. One interpretation given for this: Haman's decrees were given in order to physically annihilate the nation (as opposed to Chanukah, where they were designed to destroy the nation spiritually). In order to annul this evil decree, the Jews fasted and

afflicted their souls. “In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.” (Esther 4:3) When the Jews were saved, the event was celebrated with a feast and with drink, the opposite of fasting and afflicting the soul.

### Sending gifts [of food]

The aim of this precept is to cultivate mutuality in joyfulness: The person receiving the gift is happy with his portion and the fact that he was remembered; the sender is glad to have caused his friend joy. On the matter of sending the gifts, it is important to note the following points:

- By sending portions, it means the sending of two portions to one person. The Rambam ruled as follows: Wherever the Torah speaks in the plural and does not indicate a number, this means at least two. In our case ‘portions’ (*manot*) means at least two. From the expression ‘one another’ we learn that in order to fulfill the obligation of sending gifts [of food], one must send at least two portions to one person.
- The portions must be ready to eat. According to the Rambam’s ruling, it follows that a person must send his friend portions ready to be feasted on, with no need for preparation (i.e., he shall not send raw ingredients such as flour, sugar or seasoning).
- A person who cannot afford to prepare portions to be sent may suffice with exchanging them with his friend. From other stories in the Gemara, it can be learned that the portions sent should include fine dishes that are not normally served on weekdays. It may be that the Rambam understood that not everyone can afford to provide a fine Purim feast and sending gifts [of food]; hence, the two precepts have been intertwined and replaced their feasts. The precept of sending portions applies to every Jew, even the poor. The precepts of sending portions and gifts to the poor

obligate every Jew, both men and women, even if they themselves are poor and receive charity.

### Gifts to the poor

The aim of this precept is that all classes of society should be joyful, even those who may be barred from it due to economic constraints.

### Order of precepts

The order of precepts is written in the following verse: As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. (Esther 9:22).

One can tell that the holiday activity begins at home – “feasting and joy”, continues to friends with “sending portions one to another,” friends of the person fulfilling the precept and, finally, directed towards the poor – “and gifts to the poor” outside the person’s home or immediate circle of the celebrator. Thus joy shall reach nearly everyone and be as complete as possible.

From: Joy of Purim, teacher’s guide, department of planning and development of study programs;

