

Rabbi M. Dubitsky

YU- Sacks- Herenstein Center

August 2022



“Happiness is a direction, not a place.” – Sydney J. Harris

Is this quote an accurate portrayal of happiness in Judaism? Why or why not?

Let's look at some classical sources and areas in Jewish life to see how we can understand the description, definition and application of happiness in our lives.

Our primary source will be citations from the Kitzur Shulcahn Aruch and the writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z"l.

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It is a positive commandment of the Torah¹ *Even in our times.* (See *Magein Avraham 128:41, Peri Megadim etc., unlike the Penei Yehoshua, Maseches Kesubos 24b and Yeshuos Yaakov, who assert that it is de'oraisa only in the Beis Hamikdash.*) for the *kohanim* to bless the people, as it is said: "This is how you must bless the Children of Israel."²

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How would Rabbi Sacks answer the above questions? Does he differ or expand our traditional explanations of happiness? Please substantiate your answers with specific examples from his writings.

If you were writing to a friend who was not happy, depressed, or lonely what would you write them about Judaism's view to help them reach a level of happiness in their lives? Write a brief paragraph in letter format from you to another student helping them understand the role of happiness in Judaism.

Extra Credit: Are there any other areas in halacha where happiness is discussed that were not enumerated above?

Extra Credit: Although we have limited the sources to halacha—are there any Jewish personalities in Tanach that embody this temperament and embody or use the descriptions that are listed above?
