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"What's New?" The Art of the Good Vort

Gitty Stolik

JOY IS "IN." For one, because we need it more. But it's also in the air because we live in a special time. We are at the end of *galus* and approaching *Geulah* with its state of permanent joy. Joy is the modus operandi for our time.

At a *farbrengen* on Yud Shvat, 5745, the Rebbe introduced a new joy campaign based on the name of the Frierdiker Rebbe. His name Yitzchak bears a message of laughter and joy, and as a *nasi* of the generation, his name becomes the code, not only for himself, but for everyone in his generation. "*Kol hashomaya yitzchak li*... Everyone who hears [my good news] shall laugh and rejoice with me" (*Bereishis* 21:6).

The Rebbe's conclusion was that the mission for our times is not just to be happy ourselves but to make another Jew happy. And his name Yosef tells us to increase, to add on.

After Sarah gave birth to Yitzchak she acknowledged the wonderful trait of joining in one another's *simchah*. The Rebbe interpreted and expanded upon her words as follows: Everyone [you meet] shall [have some reason to] laugh and rejoice with you. "With you" here means "because of you." As a result of your meeting and the good news you shared, this person should be perked up. *Shvat* = sh*eyehei* b*esuros tovos,* so what better time than the present?

We enjoy relationships with people we know and love, but the joy of relationships is not just about getting; it's about giving. "An encounter with another Jew should result in making people laugh and rejoice," the Rebbe said at that farbrengen.

Joy doesn't have to be propped up with pricey commodities. We can make people happy quite easily with something that's readily available, in plentiful quantities – words!

Jews often finish their conversation with a parting wish, "*Besuros tovos*!"—may we hear good news. Just call it BT for short. We can produce a new age of BT's by upgrading our lifestyle to one in which *besuros tovos* become a focal point.

Reb Chatzkel Brod, author of the classic *Chassidic Light in the Soviet Darkness,* was a remarkably joyful Jew. The oppression and deprivation he grew up with did not dampen his spirits. After escaping Communism and reaching freedom, Reb Chatzkel opened a store. He was a butcher by trade, but his real business was spreading *simchah*. He had a juicy Torah *vort* with a punch line for every customer who stepped into the butcher shop. My mother used to tell me, "People could make their meat orders by phone, but they love to come in and hear a *freilicher vort* from him." Everyone walked out of his store smiling.

The Rebbe often expressed his gratitude to a *chossid* who notified him of a positive development in his life situation. (Oh, are we quick to complain and run for a blessing when things are not as they should be.)

So many wonderful things happen to each of us in the course of a day. When we learn to earmark them in our thoughts, and take the time to express them verbally, we are creating a wonderful field of positive energy. I certainly have room for improvement in that area. Let me do *teshuvah* right now. Here are some of my BT thoughts: The merchandise I ordered has arrived! I found a birthday card with just the right message! The kids played nicely for the last hour!

Just last week someone rang my bell. He had walked far in the cold to return my wallet. [See "Of Kindness and Courage" in this issue for details. -Ed.]

There are two kinds of good news. One is about things that have already happened; things we know about. The other kind of

good news is about things that haven't happened yet; things still in the potential stage. By giving voice to it, we empower it, so that it can emerge from the potential to the actual. Find something positive to say to the person you encounter on the street, at work, neighbors, old friends or new friends. The good news is that everyone has good qualities in them.

We are not just sharing good news about ourselves. We can also share promising developments from the world news, science or health discoveries, and community updates to replace the ubiquitous gripes and criticism.

Let's recall the major development in our times—the *navi* of our generation has proclaimed that "Moshiach is on his way" (Shoftim 5751).

Some would dismiss this as old news by now. But the Moshiach reality in the world is a continually unfolding one.

For example, this news item was publicized in *Yated Ne'eman* last spring: The Vilna Gaon *zt"l* had revealed, shortly before he passed away (and it was not publicized until now):

> When the Russians will conquer Crimea, it will be a sign that the "bells of Moshiach" are ringing—a heavenly sign that we are now on the verge of the *Geulah*. And when they will reach Constantinople (Istanbul), it will be time to put on our Shabbos clothes and not take them off again, because Moshiach will be coming at any minute. ■

This second installment of "The Moshiach Page" is dedicated to our beloved Founder, Mrs. Brana Shaina Deitsch a"h, who passed away suddenly Erev Sukkos 5775. She personified the words "hama'aseh hu ha'ikar," the main thing is Action. Her pure simchah, her enthusiasm to do and to get others to do, and her chassidishkeit and hiskashrus are her legacy to us.

