

# THE EMOTIONS OF TESHUVA #1

## A TRADITIONAL APPROACH



### 1) Rabbi Joseph b. Soloveitchik, “Religious Styles” in *Halakhic Morality: Essays on Ethics and Masorah*” (Maggid Books: New York, 2017), 196-197

We have in Torah a derekh Hashem (Gen. 18:19) and a derekh ha-hayyim (Jer. 21:8), a way of God and a way of life. I want to introduce here another term. Besides possessing derekh ha-hayyim, a Torah way of life, we also have a Torah style of living, what we may call a signon ha-hayyim....

The difference between the two is obvious. The way of a religious life is universal. Everyone travels along the same path. No highway is paved for just one individual and denied to all others. The Torah way of life is a wide, well-paved road lined with signs, arrows and other symbols pointing out each turn, curve or twist... However, two people may travel on the same highway, in the same direction, following the same signs – and yet each may have an individual style of movement. One moves gracefully, with rhythm to his movements; the other moves clumsily, awkwardly, always out of step with his co-travelers...

Two people may sit at a seder table and go through the same motions. If we should ask what they are doing, the answer would be that they are both doing what the Shulhan Arukh requires of them. However, if the question should shift from what they are doing to how they are doing it – if the question should be related not to the way of doing but to the style in which they are doing it – the answer would be that each does it in his own characteristic individual style. One lets joy manifest itself in song and dance; his performance is an ecstatic one. The other celebrates the seder with subdued happiness; he cannot express the joy which remains arrested within him. Another celebrant of the seder may fulfill the mitzvot not with ecstasy, but with a sense of commitment and surrender to the Almighty. There is one way of Jewish life, but there are a variety of styles of how to experience God while performing one’s duty. “‘That they should do’ – this refers to [going] beyond the letter of the law,” each person in his own manner or style.

**2) Rav Ravid Nagar, "Mussar: The Month of Elul" (August 28, 2017), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uhXmX7tjls>**

A person who is not afraid when a lion runs towards him – this indicates that he does not understand what a lion is. The ba'alei mussar say: "Aryeh" (אריה) is a mnemonic for Elul, Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, and Hoshana Rabbah. These days are running towards us. We have already begun the running of the Aryeh. We are already at the peak of the "Lion." We need to wake up! How can it be that Elul enters and we continue as usual!

The Sages say that even the fish in the sea are trembling. We also need to be afraid.

**3) "Selichos - Carlebach Minyan - Ramat Beit Shemesh - תשע"ז" (September 19, 2017), available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKNW0X9\\_fm](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKNW0X9_fm)**

**4) רמב"ם הלכות תשובה ב:ב**

ומה היא התשובה? הוא שיעזוב החוטא חטאו, ויסירו ממחשבתו, ויגמור בלבו שלא יעשהו עוד, שנאמר: "יעזוב רשע דרכו ואיש אוון מחשבותיו" (ישעיהו נה, ז). וכן יתנחם על שעבר, שנאמר: "כי אחרי שובי נחמתי" (ירמיהו לא, יח), ויעיד עליו יודע תעלומות שלא ישוב לזה החטא לעולם, שנאמר: "ולא נאמר עוד אלהינו למעשה ידינו" (הושע יד, ד). וצריך להתודות בשפתיו ולומר עניינות אלו שגמר בלבו

What constitutes Teshuvah? That a sinner should abandon his sins and remove them from his thoughts, resolving in his heart, never to commit them again as [Isaiah 55:7] states "May the wicked abandon his ways...." Similarly, he must regret the past as [Jeremiah 31:18] states: "After I returned, I regretted." [He must reach the level where] He who knows the hidden will testify concerning him that he will never return to this sin again as [Hoshea 14:4] states: "We will no longer say to the work of our hands: `You are our gods.'" He must verbally confess and state these matters which he resolved in his heart.

**5) רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ב:ד**

מדרכי התשובה להיות השב צועק תמיד לפני השם בבכי ובתחנונים ועושה צדקה כפי כחו ומתרחק הרבה מן הדבר שחטא בו ומשנה שמו כלומר אני אחר ואיני אותו האיש שעשה אותן המעשים ומשנה מעשיו כולן לטובה ולדרך ישרה וגולה ממקומו, שגלות מכפרת עון מפני שגורמת לו להכנע ולהיות עניו ושפל רוח.

Among the paths of repentance is for the penitent to constantly call out before God, crying and entreating; to perform charity according to his potential; to separate himself far from the object of his sin; to change his name, as if to say "I am a different person and not the same one who sinned;" to change his behavior in its entirety to the good and the path of righteousness; and f) to travel in exile from his home. Exile atones for sin because it causes a person to be submissive, humble, and meek of spirit.

6) רבינו יונה, שערי תשובה, שער א

יב היגון, ישתונן כליותיו ויחשוב כמה רבה רעת מי שהמרה את יוצרו. ויגדיל יגון בלבבו וסער מתחולל ברעיוניו, ויאנה במרירות לב, כי יתכן שיתחרט וירע בעיניו על חטאתו אשר חטא, ולא השלים חקו בזה, כי גם הפסד דינר או איסר קשה בעיני האדם, אך אם אבד עשרו בענין רע ויצא נקי מנכסיו, נפשו עליו תאבל ותכבד אנהתו ונפשו מרה לו. וכן על צרות רעות ורבות כאבו נצה, ויגון בלבבו יומם.

ויותר מהמה ראוי שיצטער ויאנה מי שהמרה את השם יתברך, והשחית והתעיב עלילה לפניו, ולא זכר יוצרו אשר בראו יש מאין, וחסד עשה עמו, וידו תנחהו בכל עת, ונוצר נפשו בכל רגע, ואיך מלאו לבו להכעיס לפניו? ואיך טח מראות עיני החוטא מהשכיל לבבו? והמשכיל אשר נפקחו עיניו, יוחקו הדברים האלה בלבבו ויבואו חזרי רוחו

יג ומדרגות התשובה ומעלותיה לפי גודל המרירות ועוצם היגון...

The third principle is grief: His conscience should darken as he thinks about the great evil of one who rebels against his Maker. He should magnify the grief in his heart, experience a storm in his thoughts and sigh with a bitter heart. For it is possible for him to regret all the sins that he did and find them to be bad in his eyes, yet not fill his measure in this. For even the loss of a dinar or an isar (a small coin) is difficult in the eyes of a man. However, if he lost [all of] his wealth in a bad way and was cleaned out of possessions, his soul would [actually] mourn and his sighing would be heavy. And likewise is his pain infinite and his grief daily for many and frequent troubles.

And more than [about] these is it fitting to be distressed and constantly sigh for one who rebelled against God, may He be blessed, was destructive, performed disgusting acts in front of Him; and who did not remember his Maker who created him ex nihilo, did kindness with him, placed His hand upon him at every instant and guards his spirit at all times - how could he have the temerity to bring anger in front of Him? And how were the eyes of the sinner shut from seeing; from having his heart understand? And one who understands and has eyes opened will inscribe these words onto his heart, so that they will enter the chambers of his spirit.

And the levels of repentance and their stature is based on the greatness of the bitterness and the power of the grief.

7) רבינו יונה, שערי תשובה, שער א

טו הצער במעשה, כמו שנאמר (יואל ב, יב): וגם עתה נאם ה' שובו עדי בכל לבבכם ובצום ובבכי ובמספד, ואמרו זכרונם לברכה (ירושלמי ברכות פ"א ה"ה): הלב והעינים שני סרסורי החטא. וכן כתוב (במדבר טו, לט): ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם, לכן בזאת יכופר עון הסרסורים במדת תשובתם כנגד מדת משובתם, כי יתכפר עון לבב החטאים במרירותם ואנהתם, כשבר אשר הם שוברים אותו, כמו שכתוב (ישעיה נז, טז): כי רוה מלפני יעטוף, ונאמר (תהלים נא, יט): לב נשבר ונדכה אלקים לא תבזה. והמשל על זה מן הכלים הטמאים אשר נשברו, מטומאתם טהרו, כמו שנאמר (ויקרא יא, לה): תנור וכירים יתץ, ועון העינים יכפר בדמעות...

The fourth principle is pain in [his] actions, as it is stated ([Joel 2:12](#)), "'Yet even now' - says the Lord - 'Turn back to Me with all your hearts, and with fasting, weeping, and lamenting.'"

And they, may their memory be blessed, said ([Yerushalmi Berakhot 1:4](#)), "The heart and the eyes are the two intermediaries of sin." And so it is written ([Numbers 15:39](#)), "and you shall not go astray after your hearts and after your eyes." Hence with this will the sin of the intermediaries be atoned - with the measure of repentance according to the measure of the affliction. For the iniquity of the heart is atoned by its bitterness and sighing - with the brokenness with which it is broken, as it is stated ([Isaiah 57:16](#)), "when spirits in front of Me cover themselves." And it is [also] written ([Psalms 51:19](#)), "God, You will not despise a contrite and crushed heart." And the parable about this is from the [impure] vessels - when they are broken, they are purified, as it is stated ([Leviticus 11:35](#)), "an oven or stove shall be smashed."



#### 8) רבינו יונה, שערי תשובה, שער א

טז הדאגה. כי ידאג ויפחד מעונש עונותיו, כי יש עונות שהתשובה תולה כפרתם ויסורים ממרקים, כמו שנאמר (תהלים לח, יט): כי עוני אגיד אדאג מחטאתי. וענין היגון - על שעבר, וענין הדאגה - על העתיד.

ועוד שנית ידאג, אולי הוא מקצר בחובת התשובה בצער ובמרירות ובצום ובבכי, וגם כי הרבה צער והרבה בכה, יזחל ויירא אולי לעמת זה הרבה אשמה, ולא השלים חוקו את כל ענותו ואשר יבכה בצום נפשו, ומי שהתבונן בגודל עבודת הבורא על יצוריו וכי אין קץ לרעת הממרה את פיו, כל אשר יוסיף בעבודה ובדרכי התשובה, הלא מצער היא והנה למעט בעיניו.

יז ועוד ידאג בעל תשובה פן יתגבר עליו יצרו, כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה (אבות ב, ד): אל תאמין בעצמך עד יום מותך, כל שכן האיש אשר נצחו לבו כבר, כי ראוי להשמר מן היצר האורב בכל עת, ולהוסיף בנפשו יראת השם יום יום, ותהיה לו למעוז בעבור עליו כל משברי היצר המתחדש לעתיד.

The fifth principle is worry: As he will worry and fear from the punishment of his iniquities. For there are iniquities for which the repentance has the atonement depend upon cleansing afflictions, as it is stated (Psalms 38:19), "I acknowledge my iniquity; I am fearful over my sin." The content of grief is about the past, whereas the content of worry is about the future.

And he will also doubly worry - maybe he is falling short in his obligation of repentance with pain, bitterness, fasting and crying. And even if he has multiplied the pain and multiplied the crying, he should crawl and fear - maybe corresponding to this had he multiplied his guilt; so that all of his affliction and having his soul cry in its fast did not fill his measure. And one who

examines the greatness of the service to the Creator upon his creatures and that there is no end to the evil of one who rebels against His word [will know that even with] all of what he adds to his service and in the ways of repentance, is it not small?

And the penitent should also worry lest his impulse overpower him. [It is] like they, may their memory be blessed, said (Avot 2:4), "Do not trust in yourself until the day of your death" - all the more so, a man whose heart has already vanquished him. For it is fitting to guard oneself every instant from the ambushing impulse; and to add fear of God to himself every day. And it will [then] be a fortress when all of the breakers of the impulse that renew themselves in the future pass upon him



### 9) רבינו יונה, שערי תשובה, שער ב

טו כל עת יכון לקראת אלקיו, כי לא ידע האדם את עתו, על כן כליותיו ישתונן, ובצדקה יכונן, להשיב רוחו בטהרה אל האלקים אשר נתנה, ויחפש דרכיו ומעלליו בכל יום, יפקדם לבקרים, ולרגעים יבחנם...

יז ויש אנשים אשר לא ירגישו בענין המות לעשות צדה לדרך ולתקן מעשיהם, ולא יעלו על לבם יום מותו עד בואו, והם נמשלים כבהמות, אשר לא ירגישו בענין המות עד יום הטביחה

וכל אנשי לבב יחשבו העולם הזה כמו דירת עראי, ולא ישתמשו בו רק לעבודת הבורא יתברך, וכינו בו צדה לנפשם, כי אם שנים רבות יהיה האדם ואילו היה אלף שנים פעמים, אחרי שיש מספר לשניו, יכלה המספר וסופו כלא היה יהיה, ועולם הגמול אין לו תכלית...

כג ומי שאינו זוכר יום המות תמיד, דומה בעיניו שיש לו פנאי ומתון להשיג חפצו. ואמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה (אבות פרק ז, משנה יז): יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעולם הזה מכל חיי העולם הבא, ויפה שעה אחת של קורת רוח בעולם הבא מכל חיי העולם הזה

The sixth path is that he should prepare to meet his God every instant. Therefore he should darken his conscience and prepare in righteousness to return his soul in purity to God who gave it [to him]. So he should search his ways and his plans every day - record them in the mornings and examine them all the time

But there are people that do not sense the matter of death, to make provisions for the road and to rectify their actions; and they do not pay attention to the day of their death until it comes. So they are compared to animals that do not sense the matter of death until the day of slaughter

And all men of heart will consider this world like a temporary dwelling; so they will only use it for the service of the Creator, may He be blessed, and prepare provisions for their souls. For if a man lives many years - even if he lived twice a thousand years - since there is a number to his years, the number will end, and his end will be as if they had not been. But the world of repayment has no end, like the matter that is stated (Job 16:22), "For a few more years will pass, and I shall go the way of no return."

But the one who does not always remember the day of his death is similar in his own eyes to one who has extra time and calm (mitun) to reach his goal.

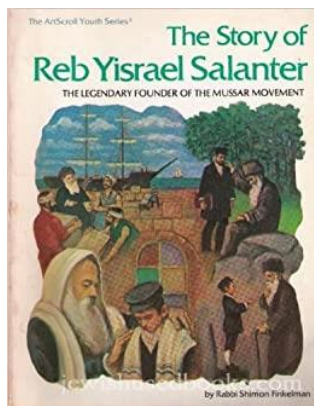
### 10) רב ישראל סלנטר, אור ישראל איגרת יד

מלפנים כאשר ידעתי - כל איש אחזו פלצות, מקול הקורא קדוש אלול. החרדה הלזו נשאה פריה להתקרב לעבודתו ית"ש, איש לפי ערכו

אכן בכלל נודע אם כי הנסיון יורנו, להיות עובד ה' ית"ש גם במדרגה נשאה, בלי לימוד המוסרי. אכן ההתהפכות מרע לטוב בלי מוסרי, (אם מוסר שמימי כו' המשברת לבו של אדם והופכתו לטוב אם היסוד הוא לימוד המוסרי) היא כמו בקשת הראיה בלי עין ושמיעה בלי אוזן - ולזאת כתבו הפוסקים אשר בימים הנוראים הללו - עת ההכנה לבא אל המשפט בר"ה, וביותר ההכנה על יוהכ"פ, אשר אין די באר העסק הגדול לפני האדם, להכין את עצמו לפני בואו

In earlier generations that I myself knew – everybody was beset with terror from the holy proclamation of the Elul. This trepidation bore fruits as each person, according to his level, was able to come close to the proper divine service...

It is generally known that experience has taught us that to serve God on an elevated level without the study of mussar... is similar to the desire for sight without an eye or for hearing without an ear. Therefore, the halakhic decisors have written that during these awesome days – the time of preparation for the judgement of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur that one must prepare himself.



### 11) רב יחזקאל לוינשטיין, אור יחזקאל חלק ב – אלול וימים נוראים – פג-פד

שאחזה פלצות בשמעם את קריאת חודש אלול, גם אני בזכרוני מימי ילדותי בלומדי בישיבת לומז'ה היו בימי אלול מתכנסים הנערים לפני תפילת מעריב במאצ'ש"ק בחדר חשוך ור' דוד טעביל מתלמידי הגר"ס הי' מדבר דברי התעוררות ומסיימים בתפילת השיבנו, וכולם היו פורצים בבכי מר מפחד יום הדין.

...

אלול, מה נענה אנן שבזמנינו שהרי רק כאשר יוצאים לרחובה של עיר מיד מתפשטת הקרירות בנפשינו. עאכר"כ שחייבים אנו להתאמץ בעבודה להגביר את פחד האלול עלינו. והכנה זו מוכרחת היא כנתבאר שאף חז"ל הוצרכו לה על אף כל מצב גדלותם, הגה לפני כניסתי עתה לישיבה שמעתי קול זמרה וכבר דומה כי השפיעה עלי קרירות מסוימת בעבודה.

I also remember from the days of my youth when I was studying at the Yeshiva of Lomza that during the days of Elul the young men would gather before the Ma'ariv prayers at the end of Shabbat in a dark room and R. Dovid Tevil, one of the students of R. Yisrael Salanter, would speak words of arousal and we would conclude with the prayer "May God return us." And we would all burst out in bitter tears due to the fear of the Day of Judgement.

What can we do during our own time that even if we walk into the streets of the city a "cooling" immediately spreads in our hearts. All the more so we are obligated to invest effort to intensify the fear of Elul upon ourselves... right before I entered the Yeshiva I heard the sound of music and immediately it seems to me, that it impacted me by creating somewhat of a "cooling" in my service.



## 12) רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ז הלכות ו-ח

גדולה תשובה שמקרבת את האדם לשכינה שנאמר שובה ישראל עד ה' אלהיך, ונאמר ולא שבתם עדי נאם ה', ונאמר אם תשוב ישראל נאם ה' אלי תשוב, כלומר אם תחזור בתשובה בי תדבק, התשובה מקרבת את הרחוקים, אמש היה זה שנאו לפני המקום משוקץ ומרוחק ותועבה, והיום הוא אהוב ונחמד קרוב וידיד

כמה מעולה מעלת התשובה, אמש היה זה מובדל מה' אלהי ישראל שנאמר עונותיכם היו מבדילים ביניכם לבין אלהיכם, צועק ואינו נענה שנאמר כי תרבו תפלה וגו' ועושה מצות וטורפין אותן בפניו שנאמר מי בקש זאת מידכם רמוס חצרי, מי גם בכם ויסגר דלתים וגו', והיום הוא מודבק בשכינה שנאמר ואתם הדבקים בה' אלהיכם, צועק ונענה מיד שנאמר והיה טרם יקראו ואני אענה, ועושה מצות ומקבלין אותן בנחת ושמחה שנאמר כי כבר רצה האלהים את מעשיך

בעלי תשובה דרכן להיות שפלים וענוים ביותר, אם חרפו אותן הכסילים במעשיהם הראשונים ואמרו להן אמש היית עושה כך וכך ואמש היית אומר כך וכך, אל ירגישו להן אלא שומעין ושומחים ויודעין שזו זכות להם, שכל זמן שהם בושים ממעשיהם שעברו ונכלמים מהן זכותם מרובה ומעלתם מתגדלת...

Teshuvah is great for it draws a man close to the Shechinah as [Hoshea 14:2] states: "Return, O Israel, to God, your Lord;" [Amos 4:6] states: "'You have not returned to Me,' declares God;" and [Jeremiah 4:1] states: "'If, you will return, O Israel,' declares God, 'You will return to Me.'" Implied is that if you will return in Teshuvah, you will cling to Me.

Teshuvah brings near those who were far removed. Previously, this person was hated by God, disgusting, far removed, and abominable. Now, he is beloved and desirable, close, and dear...

How exalted is the level of Teshuvah! Previously, the [transgressor] was separate from God, the Lord of Israel, as [Isaiah 59:2] states: "Your sins separate between you and your God." He would call out [to God] without being answered as [Isaiah 1:15] states: "Even if you pray many times, I will not hear."

He would fulfill mitzvot, only to have them crushed before him as [Isaiah 1:12] states: "Who asked this from you, to trample in My courts," and [Malachi 1:10] states: "'O were there one among you who would shut the doors that you might not kindle fire on My altar for no reason! I have no pleasure in you,' says the God of Hosts, 'nor will I accept an offering from your hand.'"



Now, he is clinging to the Shechinah as [Deuteronomy 4:4] states: "And you who cling to God, your Lord." He calls out [to God] and is answered immediately as [Isaiah 65:24] states: "Before, you will call out, I will answer." He fulfills mitzvot and they are accepted with pleasure and joy as [Ecclesiastes 9:7] states, "God has already accepted your works"...

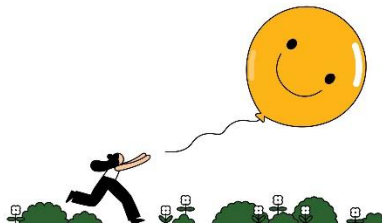
The manner of Baalei Teshuvah is to be very humble and modest.

If fools shame them because of their previous deeds, saying to them: "Yesterday, you would commit such and such [sins]. Yesterday, you would commit these and these [transgressions]," they will pay no attention to them. On the contrary, they will hear [this abuse] and rejoice, knowing that it is a merit for them.

Whenever they are embarrassed for the deeds they committed and shamed because of them, their merit increases and their level is raised.

**13) Dr. Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan, *Happiness in Premodern Judaism: Virtue, Knowledge, and Well-Being* (Hebrew Union College Press: Cincinnati, 2003), 2**

Properly understood, I contend that in Judaism happiness does not mean possessing material goods, having fun, feeling content, or enjoying physical pleasures, although some of these elements may be part of the happy life. Happiness is not a subjective feeling manifested in a given moment or for a short period of time. Instead, it means flourishing, thriving, and experiencing well-being appropriate to human beings. It is an objective state of affairs that pertains to human nature and to the quality of a human life as a whole, from the perspective of its entire duration.



**14)Dr. Darron M. McMohan, “For Most of History, People Didn’t Assume They Deserved to be Happy. What Changed?” (April 18, 2017). Available at <https://qz.com/958677/happiness-a-history-author-darrin-m-mcmahon-explains-when-the-idea-of-happiness-was-invented/>**

This lifestyle wasn’t supposed to be easy. The ranks of the content, as Aristotle observed, would ever be the “happy few.” But for those rare people who would commit themselves to the discipline of the regime, the promise of a flourishing life was great. “The mere search for higher happiness,” Cicero observed, “not merely its actual attainment, is a prize beyond all human wealth or honor or physical pleasure.” True happiness, in short, had to be earned.

**15)Rabbi Yaakov of Lisa, *Derech Chaim***

My beloved children, keep yourselves at a great distance from joy (שמחה) and frivolity (שחוק) because how can a person be happy as every day we wake up and sin. If a person was deserving of a capital punishment to a human king how could he be happy [even] on Purim and a Yom Tov, and certainly if he’s deserving of a capital punishment to the King of Kings!

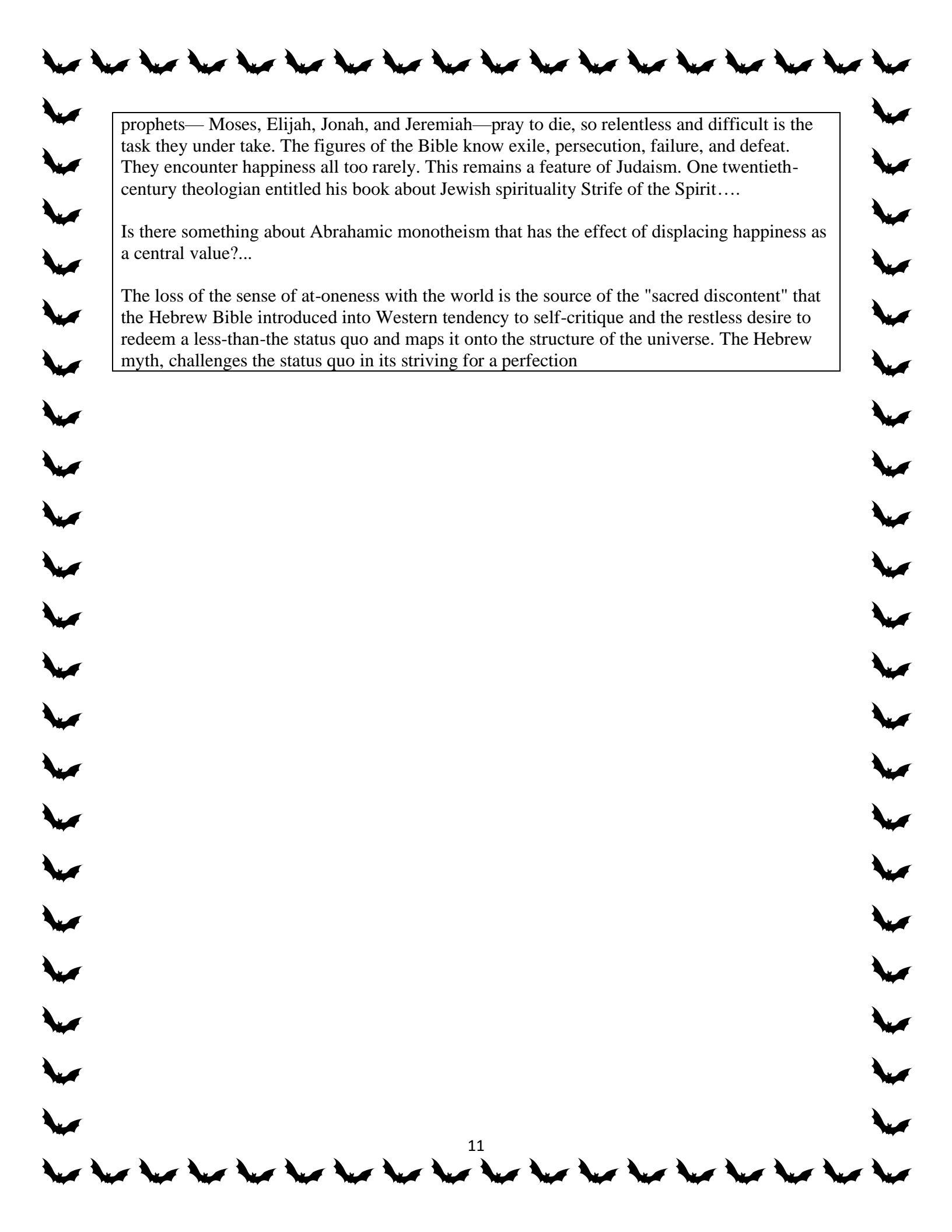
And do not listen to those who say to be happy all day long. This is all the advice of the evil inclination and “frivolity and lightheadedness leads a person to sin.” “And in all sadness there would be profit” (Kohelet 2:13). Only at a time when a person does a mitzvah or learning Torah he should have intention and joy of the heart, but not frivolity for that is a negative character trait.



**16)Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, “Happiness: A Jewish Perspective” *Journal of Law and Religion* 29:1 (Feb. 2014): 32-33**

Happiness, though, is not central to the Judaic value system. It is not the telos of human activity. Judaism is the pursuit of holiness, not the pursuit of happiness. Happiness may be the result, but it is not the aim....

Happiness is not the first word that comes to mind when we think of the heroes and heroines of the Bible. They struggle, they wrestle, they argue, they contend. Four of the biblical



prophets— Moses, Elijah, Jonah, and Jeremiah—pray to die, so relentless and difficult is the task they under take. The figures of the Bible know exile, persecution, failure, and defeat. They encounter happiness all too rarely. This remains a feature of Judaism. One twentieth-century theologian entitled his book about Jewish spirituality Strife of the Spirit....

Is there something about Abrahamic monotheism that has the effect of displacing happiness as a central value?...

The loss of the sense of at-oneness with the world is the source of the "sacred discontent" that the Hebrew Bible introduced into Western tendency to self-critique and the restless desire to redeem a less-than-the status quo and maps it onto the structure of the universe. The Hebrew myth, challenges the status quo in its striving for a perfection