Definition of true Happiness

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16:13-15 ’□□

“Be joyful at your festival. You, your children, your servants, the Levites, the strangers, the orphans, and the widows who live in your towns.”

Besides living in the Sukka and taking the four species of plants, in Sukkot we have another Mitsva: “simcha”, happiness. The Tora instructs us to be and behave happily every Yom Tob, particularly in Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Tora.

DEFINING HAPPINESS

First, we should realize how privileged we are to belong to Am Israel, knowing that HaShem protected us in the desert and that we are still under His permanent care: this thought should bring us happiness. Second, although we are used to the idea that happiness results from success and that success consists of having more, gaining more, showing more, etc., the Jewish vision of happiness is slightly different. It is not having what I want but wanting what I have and especially enjoying sharing what I have.

MEALS and GIFTS

The essence of the Mitsva of being happy consists of enjoying festive meals with our family, friends, and guests. Meat and wine are a must on Yom Tob’s menu. We eat, drink and sing in gratitude to HaShem. We honor the day and make it pleasurable as we do during Shabbat (Shulhan ‘arukh OH 529:1). In honor of Yom Tob, we should dress well, and according to the Shulchan ‘arukh we should dress in Yom Tob better than in Shabbat. (idem.) Our Sages also mentioned that each family member enjoys material happiness differently. Before Yom Tob begins, the parents should get for their children “…roasted nuts and walnuts (=the equivalent today of candies and small toys); the

husband should buy clothing and jewelry for his wife, whatever he can afford. And the husband is happy with a good meal. And his happiness increases –I would add –when seeing his wife and children happy!.

MODERATION:

The "Simcha", the joy of Yom Tob, also requires moderation. *"During Yom Tob [and this includes the celebrations of Simchat Tora] a person should not drink too much alcohol … because drunkenness and frivolity are NOT part of the Mitsva of behaving with joy: excessive consumption of alcohol brings to lightheadedness and frivolity. Our goal as Jews is to reach a level of happiness conducive to serving God. No one can serve the Almighty through frivolity and drunkenness "*(Idem., 6:19)". *The best way to serve God is to feel happy that we are fulfilling God's commandments and that we love and we are grateful to Him*. "(MT H. Sukka veLulab, 8:15).

SHARING

In the pasuq me mentioned above, the Tora specifically commanded us to share our happiness with those who have less. In a sense, the Tora is explaining to us that being happy consists of making other people happy: providing means or food to orphans, widows, and poor people (SH 'A 529: 2). Maimonides elaborates on this last point: *"If someone closes the doors of his house [to the needy] and he eats and drinks alone with his children and his wife, and does not feed and give to drink to the poor and needy, he is not feeling the joy of a mitsva, but the joy of his stomach. .* "(MT Yom Tob 6:18)