

Sukkos 5781 Vol. 11 No. 53

בס"ד חג הסוכות - זמן שמחתנו תשפ"א

וְשִׂמְחָתָּ בְּחֻגְךָ אֶתְּהָ וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ וְהַלְוִי וְהָגֵר וְהַיְתוֹם וְהָאֵלְמָנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: שְׁבַעַת יָמִים תִּחַג לָהּ אֶלְקִיךָ בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' כִּי יִבְרַךְ ה' אֶלְקִיךָ בְּכָל תְּבוּאָתְךָ וּבְכָל מַעֲשֶׂה יָדֶיךָ וְהִיִּיתָ אֶךְ שְׂמֵחַ: סֵפֶר דְּבָרִים פָּרָק ט"ז פ"ד - ט"ו

You shall rejoice on your festival – you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant, the Levite, the proselyte, the orphan, and the widow who are in your cities. A seven-day period shall you celebrate to Hashem, your G-D, in the place that Hashem, your G-D, will choose, for Hashem, your G-D will have blessed you in all your crop and in all your handiwork, and you will be completely joyous. - Devorim 16, 14-15

We are acquainted with the joyous song "Visomactoh BiChagechoh Vihoyisoh Ach Somei'ach" in various tunes, each respective to their community. One must realize that this song, a combination of the beginning of one Possuk, and the end of the next Possuk, was surely composed by great personalities, or Rabbis to focus on the great joy of the Yom Tov we are celebrating. Nevertheless, one must not forget the full text of the Possuk, as The Torah is commanding us, not only to be happy ourselves, but also to see to it, that all members of our community, all Klall Yisroel should be happy and festive on this great Yom Tov of Sukkos. More so in the current situation, of plague, sickness, loss of livelihood, Chinuch, and life R"L, one must see to it that not only he himself should rejoice with the Brochos [Blessings] of Hashem, but one must also help the afflicted in any circumstances to be in a joyous atmosphere, so they too should rejoice on the Yom Tov of Sukkos.

A Chossid from Russia once wrote a letter in the early years of Jewish settlement in the USA. In the letter he wrote to the Rashab ZY"A, how every "shnit uhn trit - step by step" in Avodas Hashem, and so too in mundane matters, are all with hardships, and difficulties. The Rashab ZY"A, answered him, "If you would only seek to see the good that is hidden in every situation, and your outlook on life would be a positive one, then you will see that all situations are Brochos, and situations to rise from".

As we stand now in the "Zeman Simchoseinu - The time of gladness", we must put aside our worldly concerns, and not be only concerned ourselves, but incorporate all members of our communities to rejoice on this Yom Tov. We shall then merit the Havtochoh [assurance], as Chazal say, that Hashem says "Im atoh misamei'ach ess sheli, Ani Misamei'ach ess sheloch - If you gladden mine, I will gladden yours"

מִצְוָה לְהִרְבוֹת בְּשִׂמְחָה זֹאת. וְלֹא הָיוּ עוֹשִׂין אוֹתָהּ עַמִּי הָאָרֶץ וְכָל מִי שִׁירְצָהּ. אֲלֵא גְדוּלֵי חֲכָמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְרֹאשֵׁי הַיְּשִׁיבוֹת וְהַסְּנֵהֲדָרִין וְהַחֲסִידִים וְהַזְקֵנִים וְאֲנָשֵׁי מַעֲשֶׂה הֵם שֶׁהָיוּ מְרַקְדִין וּמְסַפְּקִין וּמוֹנְגִין וּמְשַׁמְחִין בְּמִקְדָּשׁ בִּימֵי חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת. אֲבָל כָּל הָעָם הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׁים כָּלָן בָּאִין לִרְאוֹת וּלְשַׂמֵּעַ: רַמְבַּם ה' לולב פ"ח הל' י"ד

It was a Mitzvoh to observe this celebration as much as possible. Ignorant individuals, or anybody who wished [to participate] took no leading part in it. Only great Jewish scholars, heads of Yeshivos, members of the Sanhedrin, elders, and men of piety and good deeds danced, clapped hands, made music and entertained in the Beis HaMikdosh during the days of Sukkos. Everyone else, men and women, came to watch and listen.

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ZY"A, would expound on this Rambam as follows. Today, every man can participate in this great Simchah of Simchas Beis Hasho'eivoh, whereas in the Beis HaMikdosh, only men of stature where able to do so. Therefore, one should see to it to utilize our current unfortunate situation in Golus, and at least participate in what we can do now. May we merit a complete Geuloh, speedily in our days, and reach the heights of the days of yore. The Rambam teaches us how to rejoice. השמחה שישמח אדם בעשיית המצוה ובאהבת הא-ל שצוה בהן עבודה גדולה היא וכל המונע עצמו משמחה זו ראוי להפריע ממנו שנאמר (דברים כ"ח) תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב וכל המגיס דעתו וחולק כבוד לעצמו ומתכבד בעיניו במקומות אלו חוטא ושוטה ועל זה הזהיר שלמה ואמר אל תתהדר לפני מלך וכל המשפיל עצמו ומקל גופו במקומות אלו הוא הגדול המכובד העובד מאהבה וכן דוד מלך ישראל אמר (שמואל ב' ו') ונקלותי עוד מזאת והייתי שפל בעיני ואין הגדולה והכבוד אלא לשמוח לפני ה' שנאמר (שמואל ב' ו') והמלך דוד מפזז ומכרכר לפני ה' בריך רחמנא דסייען: רמב"ם יד החזקה הל' לולב פ"ח הל' ט"ו

The joy which a person derives from doing good deeds and from loving Hashem, who has commanded us to practice them, is a supreme form of divine worship. Anyone who refrains from experiencing this joy deserves punishment, as it is written: "Because you have not served Hashem your G-D with joy and with a glad heart" (Devorim 28:47). Anyone who is arrogant and insists on self-glory on such occasions is both a sinner and a fool. Shlomo Hamelech said: "Do not glorify yourself in the presence of the King" (Mishlei 25:6). On the other hand, anyone who humbles himself on such occasions is indeed great and honored, for he serves Hashem out of love. Dovid, Melech Yisroel, expressed this thought when he said: "I will make myself even more contemptible than this, humbling myself in my own eyes" (Shmuel II 6:22). True greatness and honor are attained only by rejoicing before Hashem, as it is written: "And King Dovid was leaping and dancing before Hashem" (Shmuel II 6:16). Rambam Hilchos Lulov 8:15

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Ah Guttin Shabbos, and ah Freilichin Yom Tov - Rabbi Naftali H. Ganzweig