

A Taste of Torah

Excitement vs. Happiness

by Rabbi Eli Mozes

In the *Shemone Esrei* prayer on the holidays we state, "And You gave us - Hashem, our G-d - with love, appointed times for rejoicing, festivals and seasons for happiness." There is a special mitzvah of *simcha*, joy and happiness, on our holidays. However, on each holiday we continue the above-mentioned prayer with a description of the significance of that holiday. For example, on Pesach we say, "This day of the festival of matzos, the time of our freedom," and on Shavuot we say "the time of the giving of our Torah," yet on Sukkos we say "the time of our *simcha*." Why is the fact that we have *simcha* on Sukkos a unique description of this holiday; doesn't this mitzvah apply to all holidays?

The Rambam (Hilchos Lulav 8:12) states, "Even though there is a mitzvah of *simcha* on all holidays, on the holiday of Sukkos there was a greater *simcha*, as it says (in the Torah, in regard to Sukkos), "And you shall rejoice before Hashem, your G-d, for seven days." Quite interestingly, the Rambam digresses from the laws of Sukkos to discuss the importance of *simcha*. He states, "That which a person rejoices when he does a mitzvah, which stems from his love for the Almighty Who commanded them, is a great and important service. And anyone who withdraws himself from this rejoicing is deserving of retribution, as it says in the Torah (that the reason why a frightening array of curses will befall the Jewish People is) 'Because you didn't serve Hashem your G-d with *simcha* and a good heart.'"

Rabbi Gedaliah Schorr (1910-1979) takes this to a deeper level. There is a concept in Judaism of the interdependence of mitzvos. Every mitzvah has a single underlying precept which will also occur in other mitzvos,

though not as the main theme. We have to focus on the central theme within each mitzvah in order to have the ability to apply this to the other mitzvos.

For example, in regard to the matzah which we eat on Pesach, the Torah states "and you shall keep watch over the matzos." The Medrash (Mechilta Exodus 12:17) says that instead of reading it as "keep watch over the matzos," it can be read as "keep watch over the mitzvos" (both words being spelled identically, though pronounced differently). From here we learn that if one has the opportunity to do a mitzvah, he shouldn't let it leaven (i.e., one should not tarry in fulfilling it), but rather do it right away. Rabbi Schorr explains that the Medrash is teaching us that the essence of this mitzvah is alacrity, not kicking the can down the road, because, as we all know, that road tends to be endless. This isn't specific to keeping watch over the matzah but, rather, is supposed to permeate all of our mitzvos.

Similarly, says Rabbi Schorr, the essence of the mitzvah of Sukkah is *simcha*, yet this isn't meant to be limited to the Sukkah. Quite the contrary, it is an important part of every mitzvah. In regard to the Sukkah, it is the essence of the mitzvah, while for other mitzvos, it is an auxiliary detail.

Yet what, indeed, does the Sukkah have to do with *simcha* more so than other holidays? Furthermore, dwelling in the Sukkah would seem to diminish our *simcha*, not increase it. Wouldn't it be easier to rejoice in the comfort of your home, in a furnished, spacious, climate-controlled dining room, instead of a small, simple, sometimes hot, sometimes cold (in Colorado, sometimes snowy) Sukkah? All of our



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Stories For The Soul

A Rabbi's Rabbi

A student of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) once approached him and asked that he officiate at his upcoming wedding. Rabbi Feinstein, after checking his calendar, apologetically told the student that he already had another wedding to attend that evening.

It soon emerged that the other wedding Rabbi Feinstein had committed to was one where he knew neither the bride nor the groom. Rather, it was the wedding of the grandchild of the man who had been Rabbi Feinstein's rebbi in Europe decades earlier, the late Rabbi Pesach Pruskin. The student respectfully asked Rabbi Feinstein why he chose to attend that wedding over the wedding of his own student.

Rabbi Feinstein explained that he felt he had to attend because he was Rabbi Pruskin's student, and gratitude to his rebbi required him to attend the wedding of his rebbi's grandchild.

Eventually, the timing of the two weddings was arranged to allow Rabbi Feinstein to attend both. Rabbi Feinstein sent a wedding gift to Rabbi Pruskin's grandchild with a note that said, "The gift which I send you is nothing in light of the deep appreciation I feel toward my rebbi."

When the time came for Moshe to die, the Jewish People refused to allow him to ascend the mountain where his soul was to depart from this world. Rashi points out that the Torah is teaching us the great love the Jewish People have for their Torah leaders, despite the challenges they may have presented them with during their lifetime.

Kollel Happenings

WHOSE RIGHT & WHO'S RIGHT?: THE DEBATE OVER THE TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

Join J. Joshua Kopelman, MD, FACOG, FACS, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they explore this emotionally-fraught and sensitive subject. Wednesday, November 1, at 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch & Learn class on the weekly parsha at the East Side Kosher Deli, 499 S. Elm St. at 12:00 am. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! Transportation can be arranged. For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

HELP BUILD THE FUTURE OF TORAH IN DENVER

Claim your part in building the future of Torah in Denver! The Kollel is in the midst of a capital campaign to build a three-story, state-of-the-art Torah Center that will serve the entire Denver Jewish community. To contribute, or for dedication opportunities and details on the building, visit denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: On Simchas Torah, the festivities center around the Torah. Many of our customs are exceptions to the usual practiced halacha and customs regarding *Krias Hatorah* (public Torah reading). How many can you name?

A: 1. On Yom Tov (which doesn't coincide with Shabbos) we have only five *aliyos*. Only on Simchas Torah do we add (many) more. 2. We even read what has been read in an earlier *aliya* (not *maftir*), something not usually done. 3. We give an *aliya* to a *kohen* after a non-*kohen* (see Mishnah Berurah 135:37 for more details). 4. We read from an additional Torah scroll for the primary (non-*maftir* or Yom Tov sacrifice) reading. We call this *Chasan Bereishis*. A notable exception is the communities of

Italy, which do not have a separate *Chasan Bereishis aliya*. 5. We call minors for a non-*maftir aliya*. 6. According to the Ashkenazic custom, the Torah is read on the evening of Simchas Torah as well.

Sources: 1. Rema Orach Chaim 282:1, 2. Ibid. 282:13. 3. Mishnah Berurah 135:37, 4. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 669:1, 5. See Mishnah Berurah 282:12, 6. Rema Orach Chaim 669:1 and Mishnah Berurah 669:15.

This week's question: The Torah begins with the word '*bereishis*'. In Torah scrolls, the first letter (ב) is enlarged. What else is unique about the writing of this word in Torah scrolls?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Aryeh Leib Gunzberg - The Shaagas Aryeh Part II

Later, Rabbi Aryeh Leib was appointed as a judge in a *bais din* (Rabbinical court). At one point, he was adjudicating a monetary dispute. One of the parties to the dispute influenced the local governor to take his side in the dispute. The governor sent one of his men to Rabbi Aryeh Leib, ordering

him to find in favor of one party. Rabbi Aryeh Leib replied that it was prohibited by the Torah to be influenced in a decision by threats. When he issued his ruling, it was against the party that the governor was advocating.

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mitzvos need to be infused with *simcha*, and we have seen what the Torah says will happen if our mitzvos lack *simcha*. Now that we have explained that the primary source from where we learn about *simcha* is from the mitzvah of Sukkah, we had better figure out the answer to these questions, or suffer the consequences.

If one were to ask you, what would it take to make you happy? You might stop, consider it for a moment, and then give over a list of five, ten or a hundred things that it would take to truly make you happy. However, this is a trap into which we all fall. Deep down, we all know that things don't make you happy; things can cause excitement, but that is short-lived. True *simcha* comes from a sense of contentment (as our Sages teach [Avos 4:1], "Who is wealthy? He who

is happy with his lot"), but even more, a sense of purpose.

For a Jew, this would mean recognizing that all that he has is from Hashem and is for Hashem, to be used in serving Him. When a Jew has the good fortune to do a mitzvah, the opportunity should fill his heart with joy. Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1892-1955) explains that, on the one hand, Sukkos is the harvest season, a time when we can easily confuse the excitement we feel with happiness. Instead, the Torah instructs us to leave our cushy homes and to detox; spend some time in your simple hut, together with your family, friends and Hashem, and experience what true *simcha* is. Then take that with you, carry it throughout the year and imbue your every mitzvah with a generous dose of *simcha*.

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