

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XLVII: Re'eh (Deut. 11:26–16:17)

Essay 9. Rejoicing with family and with the L-rd

"וְשִׂמְחֶתָּ בַּחֲגֹה אֶתָּה וּבִנְךָ" וכו' "שְׂבַעַת יָמִים תַּחֲגֹל לָהּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ . . . כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ" וכו', "וְהָיִיתָ אֶף שְׂמֵחַ". לָמָּה מִתְחַלֶּה אָמַר "וְשִׂמְחֶתָּ בַּחֲגֹה" דְּמִשְׂמַע שְׂמִיחָה גְּדוּלָּה וְשְׁלִימָה, וְאַחֲרַי כִּף אָמַר "וְהָיִיתָ אֶף שְׂמֵחַ" דְּמִשְׂמַע קִצָּת שְׂמֵחַ? וּמִכָּל שְׂכָן דְּמִפְּשֻׁט הַפְּתוּב נִרְאֶה שְׂמִיחָה מְדַבֵּר עַל שְׂמִיחָתוֹ עִם בְּנֵי בֵּיתוֹ וּבְשִׂמְחָה זוֹ אָמַר שְׂמִיחָה שְׁלִימָה, וְאַחֲרַי כִּף עַל שְׂמִיחָתוֹ לְפָנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אָמַר "וְהָיִיתָ אֶף שְׂמֵחַ" וְאַדְרַבָּא אִיפְּכָא מְסַתְּבָרָא.

“Sukkot you shall keep seven days, after you have gathered in from your threshing-floor and from your winepress. **You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities. You shall hold a festival for the L-rd your G-d seven days**, in the place that the L-rd will choose; **for the L-rd your G-d will bless you** in all your crops and all your undertakings, and **you shall surely be joyful.**” (Deut. 16:13–15).

Why at the beginning does it say, “you shall rejoice in your festival,” that has the meaning of a great and complete rejoicing, but afterward it says, “you shall surely be joyful,” that has the meaning of being a little joyful?

In any event, from the plain meaning of the Scripture, it appears that from the beginning it speaks of [the individual’s] joy with the members of his household, and regarding this joy it says it should be a complete rejoicing. But afterward, regarding his joy before the L-rd your G-d, it says, “you shall surely be joyful,” indicating a lesser rejoicing, and “to the contrary, the opposite is more reasonable.”¹

וְיֵשׁ לוֹמַר דְּרוֹמְזוֹ לְמֵאֵי דְגַרְסִינָן בְּמַסְקַת חֲגִיגָה מִי שְׂיֵשׁ לוֹ נְכָסִים מוּעָצִים וְאוֹכְלִים מְרוּבִין, מְבִיא שְׁלָמִים מְרוּבִים וְעוֹלוֹת מוּעָצוֹת. נְכָסִים מְרוּבִים וְאוֹכְלִין מוּעָצִין, מְבִיא עוֹלוֹת מְרוּבּוֹת וְשְׁלָמִים מוּעָצִים.

It can be said that this hints at what appears in tractate Chagiga (8b): “One who has many eaters [i.e., members of his household], and a small [amount of] property, may bring many peace-offerings and few burnt-offerings [so he can feed the members of his household with the peace-offerings]. [If one has] much property and few eaters, he brings many burnt-offerings and few peace-offerings.”

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¹ This is a quotation from Berachot 45b.

ולכן אמר "סג הסכת תעשה לך . . . באספה" וכו'. כשאיתה עני ואתה מאסף כל מה שיש לך בצמצום "מגרגר ומיקבד" אז תזבח שלמים מרובים ו"ושמחת בנסג", דהינינו שלמים מפני שיש לך אוכלים מרובים "אתה ובנה ובתה" וכו'. אבל אם יש לך נכסים מרובים ואוכלים מועטים, אז "תחג לה' אלהיך" תביא עולות מרובות בבית המקדש, מפני שיש לך נכסים מרובים "כי יבךך ה' אלהיך" וכו'. ואז "והיית אך שמם" דהינינו קצת שמם, כלומר שלמים מועטים.

Therefore, it says, **“Sukkot you shall keep seven days, after you have gathered in from your threshing-floor and from your winepress”** (Deut. 16:13). **When you are poor and everything you collect “from your threshing-floor and from your winepress” is a small quantity, then you will offer many peace offerings and “you shall rejoice in your festival.”** That is, **peace offerings** are appropriate in such a case, **because you have many eaters** in your household, **“you and your son and your daughter”** etc., and you and your family will be able to eat from the peace offerings.

But if you have much property and few eaters in your household, **then “you shall hold a festival for the L-rd your G-d,”** i.e., **you shall bring many burnt-offerings in the Temple, because you have much property,** as you have seen the realization of the promise, **“for the L-rd your G-d will bless you”** etc. Thus, **“you shall surely be joyful,”** which is being a little joyful, **as if to say** you will only eat a little from **a few peace-offerings** that you make, as your property exceeds your needs, so that most of your sacrifices will be in the form of burnt offerings.

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