



Nitzavim/Vayelech 5780

Happiness 24/7

בְּחֵרְתָּ בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶה אֶתְּהָ וְזָרַעְךָ (ל,יט)

There is a well-known phrase in Judaism, which also became a popular song מצוה גדולה להיות בשמחה תמיד. The question is does one of the מצוות really obligate one to constantly be בשמחה, is it just a Torah oriented perspective one should have? And if there really is such a מצוה why is it a מצוה גדולה as opposed to other מצוות?

The Pasuk in Parshas Ki Savo says תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלוֹקִיךָ בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרוב כל. The person learns from this Pasuk that besides for each mitzvah that a person can fulfill, there is an added mitzvah of Simcha, if the act of the mitzvah was done בשמחה. So we find on a personal level that there is a concept of doing mitzvos and Avodas Hashem with great joy and excitement. However, the truth is that the importance and effects of one who serves his creator with joy go much further than the personal level.

In Parshas Nitzavim the Pasuk says וְהִקְלַלְתָּ וְבִחְרַתָּ בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶה אֶתְּהָ וְזָרַעְךָ. Reb Moshe Feinstein in his sefer Dorash Moshe asks the following question. Why does the Torah add that the reason why one should choose life is למען תחיה אתה וזרעך? Just a few words before the Torah gives an explicit reason for choosing of life which is because the opposite of life is מות?

Reb Moshe answers the following. A person's choosing of life must be in such a fashion that it can trickle down and influence the next generation. Unfortunately, it is much too common nowadays that even though a person serves Hashem to the utmost degree, it doesn't get passed on to his children, in the sense that they do not have any drive to learn Torah, perform mitzvos, and serve Hashem. What could be the cause for such a phenomenon? The reason is simple. A father can serve Hashem in a way that gives off that there is no enjoyment and happiness in doing so, rather the sole purpose is because he is מאמין בה' that this is what Hashem wants. When a father serves Hashem in such a fashion, it ruins the following generation, because they will think to themselves that our father was able to serve Hashem because he was a big מאמין and he was עומד בניסיון. However, we are not able to conquer our יצר and therefore can't serve Hashem like our father did. Therefore, the Torah wants us to serve Hashem with great joy and happiness because only then will the next generation see how unbelievable it is to serve Hashem, although it may be difficult at times.

When the Torah says בּוֹחֵר בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶה אֶתְּהָ וְזָרַעְךָ, the Torah is telling us to be בוחר בחיים in such a way that it will be משפיע on to the next generation. Only when עבודת ה' is done בשמחה will it trickle down to the coming generation.



The following was said by the Mashgiach of Lakewood, Reb Matisyahu Solomon Shlitta. He explained this is what we mean when we say in Maariv, **ונשמח בדברי תורתך ובמצותך וכו' כי הם חיינו**, that Torah and mitzvahs are only our life and length of our days if they are done with an excitement and happiness .

It's not so clear if there is a מצוה included in תרי"ג which requires one to be בשמחה תמיד however one thing is for sure, that serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu with a tremendous joy and excitement is much more than just a healthy Torah outlook. Rather it is one of the essential requirements for the existence and continuation of the Jewish people. We should all be zocheh to serve Hashem and perform Torah and mitzvahs with this level of excitement and joy in order that it should trickle down and influence the many generations to come.

(Malchus Beis Dovid)