

"Because you did not serve Hashem your G-d with joy and gladness of heart." (28:47)

This *pasuk* implies that the source of all the punishment is serving Hashem with a lack of joy. The *Arizal* states that precisely because *Klal Yisrael* served Hashem in a lackluster manner, without vitality and joy, they would ultimately serve their enemies. Joy is an essential component of *avodas* Hashem, serving Hashem. Indeed, if we would not have failed to serve Hashem with joy, we would not have been exiled.

The *Yalkut Me'am Loez* explains this idea with a simple, but profound analogy. The king of a certain country had a son that was not controllable, His unrestrained acts of self-indulgence often were a source of embarrassment to his father. Whenever his father was about to punish him, the son would put on a sweet angelic smile. When the father observed the happiness and sweet innocence in his son's eyes, it became difficult for him to execute his planned punishment.

This, explains the *Yalkut*, is a powerful deterrent from punishment. When Hashem sees the apparent joy and happiness emanating from an individual's *avodas* Hashem, He defers punishment. Joy in performing *mitzvos* is essential. Even if a person is intellectually aware of the significance of *Torah* and appreciates the value of *Torah* life, he must experience this through joy. Unless one recognizes the inherent joy with which Judaism imbues us, he may turn elsewhere to pursue happiness.