

## **And you shall be glad with all the goodness that Hashem, your G-d, has given you and your household – you and the Levi and the ger who is in your midst. (26:11)**

A farmer toils, labors in the field, at times under grueling conditions. *Baruch Hashem*, he is successful and his field produces a bumper crop. Obviously, at this point, the farmer will be overwhelmed with joy. Why does the Torah enjoin him to rejoice? One would expect this to be a given. *Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl*, observes that human nature is such that man is never happy with what he has. *Mi she'yeish lo manah rotzeh masaim*, "One who has one hundred – wants two hundred." He is never satisfied. Whatever success he has achieved he always feels that he could have done better; he could have made/acquired/succeeded more. While this might be a good thing with regard to Torah study and erudition, concerning materialism, it can drive a person to a voracious desire to amass more and more, thus transforming him into an unhappy person. Rather than sit back and rejoice over what he has achieved, he is miserable concerning what he does not have. His problem arises from the misguided notion that whatever he has accomplished in life is the result of his own doing. One who lives life knowing that everything he has and all that he has achieved is only due to Hashem, understands that he will not receive that which Hashem does not deem to be appropriate for him (at that time). By enjoining us to rejoice, the Torah is intimating to us: Be satisfied with what Hashem has given to you. Do not permit your desire for more – your "wants" – to supplant your "needs", impeding your ability to rejoice with what Hashem has given to you.

The Torah exhorts us to rejoice by sharing our goodness with others – our family – and with those less fortunate than we are. True *simchah*, posits the *Rosh Yeshivah*, is attained only when one shares his *simchah* with the destitute and the dejected. If we wish our *simchah* to reach its apex, its fullest potential, then we should see to it that we share our *simchah* with those in need.

Perhaps, I might suggest another form of sharing, one that surprisingly (mostly due to petty reasons) some of us have great difficulty in accepting: sharing other people's joy or – as psychologists refer to it – manifesting positive empathy. This concept applies not only to parents sharing their child's success, but also rejoicing for and with the child. (It is not only about the parent's *nachas* and boasting rights). This concept also includes sharing a student's success, or a spouse's achievement, but, most of all, the success and happiness of other people – friend or acquaintance. The idea that one can be happy for others means that one cares about others, that life is not only about oneself. True satisfaction is derived when one shares other people's joy, because then he shows that other people are also significant; their joy is my joy. When one acknowledges this, he realizes that, unless he shares another person's joy, he is limiting his own sense of satisfaction. Thus, true satisfaction is achieved when one shows positive empathy and shares in another person's joy.