

The Simchah and Oneg of Yom Tov

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בבלי ביצה טו עמוד ב

ת"ר מעשה ברבי אליעזר שהיה יושב ודורש כל היום כולו בהלכות יום טוב. יצתה כת ראשונה אמר הללו בעלי פטסין. כת שניה אמר הללו בעלי חביות. כת שלישית אמר הללו בעלי כדין. כת רביעית אמר הללו בעלי לגינין. כת חמישית אמר הללו בעלי כוסות. התחילו כת ששית לצאת אמר הללו בעלי מארה. נתן עיניו בתלמידים התחילו פניהם משתנין. אמר להם בני לא לכם אני אומר אלא להללו שיצאו שמניחים חיי עולם ועוסקים בחיי שעה. בשעת פטירתן אמר להם לכו אכלו משמנים ושתו ממתקים ושלחו מנות לאין נכון לו כי קדוש היום לאדונינו ואל תעצבו כי חדות ה' היא מעוזכם.¹

¹ The Sages taught in a *baraisa*: There was an incident involving Rabbi Eliezer, who was sitting and lecturing about the *halachos* of the Festival throughout the entire Festival day. When the first group left in the middle of his lecture, he said: These must be owners of extremely large jugs [*pittasin*], who apparently have huge containers of wine awaiting them as well as a comparable amount of food, and they have left the house of study out of a craving for their food. After a while a second group departed. He said: These are owners of barrels, which are smaller than *pittasin*. Later a third group took its leave, and he said: These are owners of jugs, even smaller than barrels. A fourth group left, and he said: These are owners of jars [*laginin*], which are smaller than jugs. Upon the departure of a fifth group, he said: These are owners of cups, which are smaller still. When a sixth group began to leave, he became upset that the house of study was being left almost completely empty and said: These are owners of a curse; i.e., they obviously do not have anything at home, so why are they leaving? He cast his eyes upon the students remaining in the house of study. Immediately, their faces began to change color out of shame, as they feared he was referring to them and that perhaps they should have departed along with the others instead of staying. He said to them: My sons, I did not say that about you but about those who left, because they abandon the eternal life of Torah and engage in the temporary life of eating. At the time of the remaining students' departure at the conclusion of Rabbi Eliezer's lecture, he said to them the verse: "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to him for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nechemiah 8:10).

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Rabbi Eliezer seems to be quite a strict taskmaster who would deny his students a *seudas Yom Tov*. Some *rishonim* raise the issue of whether he allows or even promotes fasting on Yom Tov.² The Gemara goes on to explain his position:

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אמר מר שמניחין חיי עולם ועוסקין בחיי שעה. והא שמחת יום טוב מצוה היא. רבי אליעזר לטעמיה דאמר שמחת יום טוב רשות. דתניא רבי אליעזר אומר אין לו לאדם ביום טוב אלא או אוכל ושותה או יושב ושונה. ר' יהושע אומר חלקהו חציו לה' וחציו לכם. אמר רבי יוחנן ושניהם מקרא אחד דרשו. כתוב אחד אומר עצרת לה' אלהיך. וכתוב אחד אומר עצרת תהיה לכם. הא כיצד. רבי אליעזר סבר או כולו לה' או כולו לכם. ורבי יהושע סבר חלקהו חציו לה'.³

Rebbe Eliezer feels Yom Tov is celebrated either spiritually, כולו לה', or with physical enjoyment, כולו לכם. Does he in fact hold that the *mitzvah* of שמחת יום טוב is not binding? Indeed, some *rishonim* do say this.⁴ Yet, at the end, he sends them to their meal with his blessing that they enjoy themselves, quoting a verse in *Sefer Nechemiah*. It is worth noting that this verse is referring to the Yom Tov of Rosh Hashanah, the least celebratory of the six Yamim Tovim, of which Rambam says (*Hilchos Chanukah* 3:6): אינם ימי שמחה יתרה, “they are not days of excessive *simchah*” and thus *Hallel* is not said on it. Nevertheless, even there, he ultimately agrees that the *mikra* instructs us in אכלו משמנים ושתו ממתקים, “eat the fat and drink the sweet.” Why does he seemingly reverse his original scorn to those who engage in חיי שעה, temporal life?

² עי' תוס' רי"ד שם.

³ The Gemara clarifies this *baraisa*. The Master said above: Because they abandon eternal life and engage in temporary life. The Gemara wonders at this: But isn't the joy of the Festival itself a *mitzvah* and therefore part of eternal life? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Eliezer conforms to his standard line of reasoning, as he said: Physical joy on a Festival is merely optional. As it is taught in a *baraisa* that Rabbi Eliezer says: A person has no way of fulfilling the *mitzvah* of a Festival correctly apart from either eating and drinking, thereby fulfilling the *mitzvah* of joy in a completely physical manner, or sitting and studying Torah, thereby emphasizing only the spiritual; and those who did not engage in Torah study to the fullest extent acted inappropriately. Rabbi Yehoshua says: There is no need for such a dichotomy; rather, simply divide it: Half to God, Torah study, and half to yourselves, engaging in eating, drinking, and other pleasurable activities.

⁴ עי' תוס' רי"ד, רא"ה שהובא בשטת הקדמונים, רז"ה פסחים סח: דיש מבארים דיכול ללמוד במקום מצות שמחה ויש מפרשים דאף רק להתענות אף דלא למד דזהו אפשר להיות קיום של כולו לה'. ועי' בדרכי משה או"ח תקכ"ב: דאפשר להתענות כל היום לפי דעתו.

With regard to our first question of what happened with the *mitzvah* implied by *וְשִׂמְחָתָּ בְּהֵגִיךְ*, some commentaries explain⁵ that *כולו לה'* is a means of fulfilling this *mitzvah*, rather than a means of *דחיית המצוה*, pushing aside the *mitzvah*. Still, it is perplexing to think that Rabbi Eliezer saw the day of Yom Tov as a day of fasting, and as we pointed out, his subsequent actions imply that he did indeed expect physical celebration to be a part of Yom Tov, even for his best *talmidim*.

To understand this Gemara and the nature of *simchas* Yom Tov, let us turn to the words of Rambam in *Mishneh Torah*.

The Shabbos of Yom Tov

Our analysis of Rambam's *shittah* begins not in *Hilchos Yom Tov* but in *Hilchos Shabbos*, in the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush*.⁶

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות שבת
[כט:יה] כשם שמקדשין בלילי שבת, ומבדילין במוצאי שבת; כך מקדשין בלילי
ימים טובים, ומבדילין במוצאיהן ובמוצאי יום הכיפורים--שכולם שבתות ה' הן.⁷

The twenty-ninth chapter of *Hilchos Shabbos* deals with the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush*. It is there that he tells us that *mitzvas Kiddush* also applies to Yom Tov. The concept of *Kiddush* applies to every day that is a Shabbos and the character of Shabbos is imbedded in each day of Yom Tov. Strikingly, Rambam's conceptual construction of *Mishneh Torah* brought him to include the obligation to make *Kiddush* on Yom Tov in *Hilchos Shabbos*. In the *mikra* as well, the *parashah* of the *mo'adim* (Leviticus 23) begins with Shabbos, and the *mikra* there constantly refers to the Yamim Tovim as *shabbosos*. Rambam emphasizes this as well in *Hilchos Shevisas Yom Tov*, where the halachos begin with the listing of the six *mitzvos aseh* of *שביתה*, "resting," on each individual Yom Tov, each a separate *mitzvah* listed in the *Sefer Ha-Mitzvos – aseh* 159ff. There he explains that the term *שבתון* teaches the obligation to rest on that day.⁸

⁵ עי' בר"י אבוהב שהובא בשטת הקדמונים. ועי' במאירי.

⁶ The *משנה תורה* text is from *Mechon Mamre*, <https://mechon-mamre.org/i/0.htm>.

⁷ Just as we recite *Kiddush* on Friday night and *Havdalah* on Saturday night, so too, we recite *Kiddush* on the night of a holiday's commencement and *Havdalah* on the night following a holiday, and on the night following Yom Kippur, for they are all "Shabbosos of G-d."

⁸ There he notes that some of the Yamim Tovim do not explicitly use the word *שבת* and *derashos* are needed to derive them. The constant use of *שבת* in *Emor* extends to the seven weeks of *Sefirah* and helps us understand the use of the term *ממחרת השבת* for *שבועות*.

Now let us turn to chapter thirty of *Hilchos Shabbos*, where Rambam details the laws of honoring and enjoying Shabbos.

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות שבת

[ל:א] ארבעה דברים נאמרו בשבת--שניים בתורה, ושניים מדברי סופרים והן מפורשין על ידי הנביאים: שבתורה "זכור" (שמות כ:ח) ו"שמור" (דברים ה:יב), ושנפרשו על ידי הנביאים, כיבוד ועינוג, שנאמר "וקראת לשבת עונג, לקדוש ה' מכובד" (ישעיהו נח, יג).

[ל:ז] איזה הוא עינוג: זה שאמרו חכמים שצריך לתקן תבשיל שמן ביותר, ומשקה מבושם, הכול לשבת--הכול לפי ממונו של אדם. וכל המרבה בהוצאת שבת ובתיקון מאכלים רבים וטובים, הרי זה משובח...

[ל:ט] חייב אדם לאכול שלוש סעודות בשבת--אחת ערבית, ואחת שחרית, ואחת במנחה. וצריך להיזהר בשלוש סעודות אלו, שלא יפחות מהן כלל; ואפילו עני המתפרנס מן הצדקה, סועד שלוש סעודות. ואם היה חולה מרוב האכילה, או שהיה מתענה--פטור משלוש סעודות. וצריך לקבוע כל סעודה משלושתן על היין, ולבצע על שתי כיכרות. וכן, בימים טובים.⁹

The requirement of *Oneg Shabbos* applies to Yom Tov as well and thus three meals are mandated for each day of Yom Tov. Rambam makes this point in *Hilchos Yom Tov* as well, first recording the *mitzvah* of *oneg* and then the *mitzvah* of *simchah* that is unique to Yom Tov.

⁹ There are four [dimensions] to the [observance of] the Shabbos: two originating in the Torah, and two originating in the words of our Sages, which are given exposition by the Prophets. [The two dimensions originating] in the Torah are the commandments "Remember [the Shabbos day]" and "Observe [the Shabbos day]." [The two dimensions] given exposition by the Prophets are honor and pleasure, as [Isaiah 58:13] states: "And you shall call the Shabbos 'A delight, sanctified unto God and honored.'"...What is meant by [Shabbos] delight? This refers to our Sages' statement that a person must prepare a particularly sumptuous dish and a pleasantly flavored beverage for the Shabbos. All of this must be done within the context of a person's financial status. The more one spends [both financially,] in expenses undertaken for the Shabbos and [in effort,] in the preparation of many good foods, the more praiseworthy it is.... A person is obligated to eat three meals on the Shabbos: one in the evening, one in the morning, and one in the afternoon. One should be extremely careful regarding these three meals, not to eat any less. Even a poor man who derives his livelihood from charity should eat three meals [on the Shabbos]. [Nevertheless,] a person who is sick from overeating or one who fasts constantly is not obligated to partake of three meals. All these three meals must be significant [sittings] at which wine is served; at each, one must break bread on two full loaves. The same applies regarding the holidays.

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות שביתת יום טוב
[ו:טו] כשם שמצוה לכבד שבת ולענגה, כך כל ימים טובים--שנאמר "ולקדוש ה'
מכובד" (ישעיהו נח:יג) וכל ימים טובים נאמר בהן "מקרא קודש" (ויקרא כג,ז-
לו). וכבר ביארנו הכיבוד והעינוג בהלכות שבת...
[ו:טז] שבעת ימי הפסח ושמונת ימי החג עם שאר ימים טובים, כולם אסורים
בספד ותענית. וחייב אדם להיות בהן שמחה וטוב לב, הוא ובניו ואשתו ובני ביתו
וכל הנלווים עליו, שנאמר "ושמחת, בחגך וגו'" (דברים טז:יג). אף על פי
שהשמחה האמורה כאן, היא קרבן שלמים כמו שאנו מבארין בהלכות חגיגה, יש
בכלל אותה שמחה, לשמחה הוא ובניו ובני ביתו כל אחד ואחד בראוי לו.¹⁰

What emerges is that Rabbi Eliezer was not such a harsh taskmaster. His expectations were related to how the *mitzvah* of *simchah* was to be performed, but every Yom Tov incorporates *oneg*, an obligation related to its character of a שבת and tied to its nature of קודש¹¹ that it shares with שבת. But, indeed, his intent was always to send them to a sumptuous meal towards the end of the day. Indeed, the verse he quotes is **לכו אכלו משמנים** and his words for a *seudas Shabbos* are clearly based on this phrase **שצריך לתקן תבשיל שמן ביותר**, **ומשקה מבושם**. Moreover—and of crucial significance, as every Yom Tov has three meals—his *shiur* was taking place after they had eaten breakfast. When we study Rambam's presentation of the order of the day of Shabbos and Yom Tov, the issue becomes clear.

The Day of Shabbos and the Day of Yom Tov

Let us look at Rambam's presentation of the Shabbos day side-by-side with that of the Yom Tov day:

¹⁰ Just as it is a *mitzvah* to honor the Shabbos and to take delight in it, so too, do [these obligations apply to] all the holidays, as [implied by Isaiah 58:13], "...sanctified unto God and honored." [This applies to] all the holidays, for they are called, "holy convocations." We have explained the obligation implied by honor and delight in *Hilchos Shabbos*. ... It is forbidden to fast or recite eulogies on the seven days of Pesach, the eight days of Succos, and the other holidays. On these days, a person is obligated to be happy and in good spirits; he, his children, his wife, the members of his household, and all those who depend on him, as [Deuteronomy 16:14] states: "And you shall rejoice in your festivals." The "rejoicing" mentioned in the verse refers to sacrificing peace offerings, as will be explained in *Hilchos Chagigah*. Nevertheless, included in [this charge to] rejoice is that he, his children, and the members of his household should rejoice, each one in a manner appropriate for him.

¹¹ The Yamim Tovim are referred to as מקראי קודש, a point that Rambam emphasizes in the *Sefer HaMitzvos* in the *mitzvos aseh* cited above.

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות שבת

[ל:י] אכילת בשר ושתיית יין בשבת, עינוג הוא לה--והוא, שהייתה ידו משגת. ואסור לקבוע סעודה על היין בשבת ובימים טובים, בשעת בית המדרש; אלא כך הוא מנהג הצדיקים--יתפלל אדם בשבת שחרית ומוסף בבית הכנסת, ויבוא לביתו ויסעוד סעודה שנייה, וילך לבית המדרש יקרא וישמע עד המנחה, ויתפלל מנחה; ואחר כך יקבע סעודה שלישית על היין, ויאכל וישתה עד מוצאי שבת.¹²

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות שביתת יום טוב

[ו:יח] אף על פי שאכילה ושתייה במועדות בכלל מצות עשה, לא יהיה אוכל ושותה כל היום כולו--אלא כך היא הדת: בבוקר משכימין כל העם לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות, ומתפללין וקוראין בתורה בעניין היום; וחוזרין לבתיהם, ואוכלין. והולכין לבתי מדרשות, קורין ושונים עד חצי היום; ואחר חצי היום, מתפללין תפילת המנחה, וחוזרין לבתיהם לאכול ולשתות, שאר היום עם הלילה.¹³

Before we look at the differences between the two days, we must take note of the concept of *שעת בית המדרש*. The Gemara (TB *Shabbos* 115a) relates a *takanah* against even reading *Kesuvim* during this period מפני בטול בית המדרש, “because it results in neglect of the *beis midrash*,” leaving it empty, and Rashi understands that this is during a *derashah* that was given.¹⁴ Rabbi Eliezer was giving his *derashah* after Shacharis, according to Rashi, for there was only one meal on Shabbos day in his viewpoint. As

¹² Eating meat and drinking wine on the Shabbos is a form of pleasure for a person provided this is within his [financial] capacity. On the Shabbosos and holidays, a significant meal at which wine will be served is forbidden to be scheduled for the time the house of study is in session. Instead, the practice of the righteous of the former generations would be as follows: A person would recite the morning service and the additional service in the synagogue. Afterwards, he would return home and partake of the second [Shabbos] meal. He would then proceed to the house of study, to read [from the Written Law] and to study [the Oral Law] until the afternoon, at which time he would recite the afternoon service. He would then [partake of] the third [Shabbos] meal, a significant [sitting] at which wine is served, and continue eating and drinking until the Shabbos passed.

¹³ Although eating and drinking on the holidays are included in the positive commandment [to rejoice], one should not devote the entire day to food and drink. The following is the desired practice: In the morning, the entire people should get up and attend the synagogues and the houses of study where they pray and read a portion of the Torah pertaining to the holiday. Afterwards, they should return home and eat. Then they should go to the house of study, where they read [from the Written Law] and review [the Oral Law] until noon. After noon, they should recite the afternoon service and return home to eat and drink for the remainder of the day until nightfall.

¹⁴ See TB *Shabbos* 115a *d"b bein*. This refers to a specific *derashah* that was given whose content should not be missed.

noted above, the *meforshim* in fact are challenged by how he would apparently want his students to fast on Yom Tov and in fact question how fasting could be permissible.¹⁵

But according to Rambam, שעת בית המדרש was after breakfast¹⁶ and really incorporated all the time from after breakfast until *minchah ketanah*, perhaps 10a.m.–3p.m. on a Shabbos with a twelve-hour day. In fact, not everyone kept this schedule on Shabbos and here Rambam refers to מנהג הצדיקים.¹⁷ We should also note about the morning meal that Rambam defines it as יסעוד סעודה שנייה, while of the third meal he writes ואחר כך יקבע סעודה שלישית על היין, ויאכל וישתה עד מוצאי שבת. This meal has a long period assigned to it and וישתה and יין are only stated here. It is apparently the more festive meal, which is logical as the first meal is still early in the day.

With regard to Yom Tov, it is not מנהג צדיקים but rather כך היא הדת, “this is the law.” Most importantly, here the learning session is only until mid-day. This is the law, the application of the halachah of חצי לכם וחצי חצי לה.¹⁸ Interestingly, here Rambam adds משכימין, “to arise early,” which was not stated by Shabbos. The *mitzvah* of שמחה requires a full half day of לה, just as it requires a full half day of לכם, thus one must arise early to catch the whole day. And so too, with regard to the end of *seudas Yom Tov*, he says שאר היום עם הלילה, extending into the night, while with Shabbos it is עד מוצאי שבת, stopping with the end of Shabbos.

The Simchah of the Chachamim

Rebbe Eliezer’s position was, however, that his students should experience their שמחה with the special *shiur* he had prepared. האבל אסור בלימוד תורה, משום שנאמר פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב, והאבל אסור בשמחה.¹⁹ “The *avel* is prohibited from learning Torah since the commandments of the L-rd make the heart happy, and the *avel* is prohibited in *simchah*.” His understanding is that people on a higher level would have all their *simchah* with *talmud Torah*, while those on a lower level would have their *simchah* with

¹⁵ Some *rishonim* answer that this *mitzvah* is דוחה the prohibition. See footnote 4.

¹⁶ See *Hilchos Shabbos* 23:19. Note how in *Hilchos Shabbos* (30:10) he adds that this period existed on Yom Tov as well, even though the Gemara only explicitly mentions it on Shabbos.

¹⁷ Maybe some lesser people took a nap. After all, מציעין המטה מליל שבת לשבת, (כג:ח).

¹⁸ The *Maggid Mishneh* notes this.

¹⁹ In fact, Rambam does not quote this source, but it is the position of the *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh Deah* 22:1.

physical enjoyment. From the way Rambam records the laws of שמחת יו"ט in *Hilchos Yom Tov*, this position is quite reasonable. As we quoted earlier:

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות שביתת יום טוב
[ו:טז] ... אף על פי שהשמחה האמורה כאן, היא קרבן שלמים כמו שאנו מבארין
בהלכות חגיגה, יש בכלל אותה שמחה, לשמוח הוא ובניו ובני ביתו כל אחד ואחד
בראוי לו.
[ו:יז] כיצד: הקטנים, נותן להם קליות ואגוזים ומגדנות; והנשים, קונה להן בגדים
ותכשיט כפי ממונו; והאנשים, אוכלין בשר ושותין יין, שאין שמחה אלא בבשר,
ואין שמחה אלא ביין...²⁰

The concept of ראווי להם, “that which is appropriate for them,” shows that the מצות שמחה varies with all people and all should act according to what brings out the שמחה in them. An even stronger point should be derived from the fact that the heart of this *mitzvah* and its ideal performance is with the שלמים קרבן.

A full understanding of the שמחה יום טוב מצוה begins at its core, the *korban simchah*.

The *Mitzvah* of *Simchas Yom Tov*

In the *Sefer HaMitzvos*, nestled into the *mitzvos* of *korbanos*, directly following the *korbanos* of ראיה וחגיגה and preceding the קרבן פסח, comes the *mitzvah* of שמחת יו"ט²¹

ספר המצוות, מצות עשה
[נד] הציווי שנצטוונו בשמחה ברגלים. והוא אמרו יתעלה: "ושמחת בחגך" (שם
שם, יד) והיא המצווה השלישית משלוש מצוות הנוהגות ברגל. והעניין הראשי
שאליו נרמז במצווה זו - הוא: שיקריבו קורבן שלמים בהכרח, ושלמים אלו
נוספים על שלמי חגיגה, והם נקראים בתלמוד: שלמי שמחה. ועל הקרבת שלמים
אלו, אומרים: "נשים חייבות בשמחה" וכבר אמר הכתוב: "וזבחת שלמים ואכלת
שם ושמחת לפני ה'" (שם כז, ז)
וכבר נתבארנו גם דיני מצווה זו ב[מסכת] חגיגה. ובכלל אמרו "ושמחת בחגך"
מה שאמרו עוד, והוא אמרם "שמח בכל מיני שמחה" מזה: אכילת הבשר בחגים,
ושתית היין, ולבישת בגדים חדשים, וחילוק פירות ומיני מתיקה לנערים ולנשים,
והשחוק בכלי זמר ובריקוד במקדש במיוחד, והיא שמחת בית השואבה" וכל זה
נכנס בכלל אומרו "ושמחת בחגך" והחמור שבהם הוא חיוב שתיית היין דווקא,

²⁰ The “rejoicing” mentioned in the verse refers to sacrificing peace offerings, as will be explained in *Hilchos Chagigah*. Nevertheless, included in [this charge to] rejoice is that he, his children, and the members of his household should rejoice, each one in a manner appropriate for them.

²¹ The ספר המצוות text is from *Daat*,
<https://www.daat.ac.il/daat/mahshevt/hamitsvot/shaar-2.htm>.

כיון שהוא מיוחד לשמחה. ולשון גמרא פסחים: "חייב אדם לשמח בנו ובני ביתו ברגל. במה משמחם? ביין"²²
 ושם אמר: "תניא ר' יהודה בן בתירא אומר: בזמן שבית המקדש קיים אין שמחה אלא בבשר, שנאמר: וזבחת שלמים ואכלת שם ושמחת עכשו אין שמחה אלא ביין, שנאמר: ויין ישמח לבב אנוש" (תהלים קד, טו).
 ואמרו עוד: "אנשים בראוי להם, ונשים בראוי להן" ולשון התורה הוא, שנתחייב לכלל בשמחה זו העניים והמסכנים והגרים, אמר יתעלה: "והגר והיתום והאלמנה" (דברים טז, יד).²³

Here Rambam presents the mitzvah as primarily a *korban shelamim* in which women are also obligated.²³ But secondarily, all forms of שמחה are to be included. Thus, when the Beis HaMikdash no longer existed, for men wine became more central to the *mitzvah* than meat. There is also the *simchah* of dancing, but this is limited to the dancing of בית השואבה

²² And the 54th *mitzvah* is that we are commanded to rejoice on the festivals. The source of this commandment is G-d's statement (exalted be He), "You shall rejoice on your festival."

It is the third of the commandments which are fulfilled on the festivals. The first obligation that is hinted to in this commandment is the obligation to bring a peace offering. These peace offerings are in addition to the *Chagigah* peace offerings. The Talmud calls them *simchah* peace offerings. It is regarding these peace offerings that our Sages said, "Women are obligated in rejoicing." Scripture states, "You shall sacrifice peace offerings and eat there, rejoicing before G-d." The details of this *mitzvah*, too, are explained in Tractate *Chagigah*. Included in G-d's statement "You shall rejoice on your festival" are the instructions of our Sages, "You shall rejoice with all types of joy," including eating meat on the festivals, drinking wine, wearing new clothing, giving fruits and sweets to the women and children, and *Simchas Beis HaSho'evah*, i.e., the rejoicing with musical instruments and dancing in the Temple [on Succos]. All the above are included in the commandment, "You shall rejoice on your festival." The strictest obligation among them is drinking wine, since it is unique in [causing] joy. In the words of tractate *Pesachim*, "A man must bring joy to his children and household on the festival. How does he bring them joy? With wine." Our Sages also say there, "We learned, Rabbi Yehudah ben Beseira says, 'When the Temple was standing, the only way to fulfill the commandment of rejoicing was with meat [of the offerings], as it is written, 'You shall sacrifice peace offerings.' Today, the only way to fulfill the commandment is with wine, as it is written, 'Wine rejoices the heart of man.'" Our Sages also say, "Men [rejoice] in what is appropriate for them, and women [rejoice] in what is appropriate for them."

Scripture requires that one include in this rejoicing also the needy, the poor, and converts, as G-d said, "[You shall rejoice on your festival, you...] and the Levite, the convert, the orphan, and the widow."

²³ In contrast to Rashi's opinion that it is merely a *mitzvah* for the husband to be משמח אשתו ובני ביתו.

in the Mikdash. In fact, with the destruction of the Mikdash, music was prohibited.²⁴ This *simchah* must be לפני ה' and hence impossible after the destruction of the Mikdash.

Accordingly, in *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam brings the *mitzvah* of *simchah* in *Sefer Korbanos* in *Hilchos Chagigah*, where he lists the *mitzvah* in the *koseres* (heading):

משנה תורה, ספר קרבנות, הלכות חגיגה

[א:ד] השמחה האמורה ברגלים--הוא שיקריב שלמים יתר על שלמי חגיגה, ואלו הן הנקראין שלמי שמחה: שנאמר "וזבחת שלמים, ואכלת שם; ושמחת, לפני ה' אלוך" (דברים כז, ז). ונשים חייבות, במצוה זו.²⁵

[ב:טז] כשיזבח אדם שלמי חגיגה ושלמי שמחה--לא יהיה אוכל הוא ובניו ואשתו בלבד, וידמה שעשה מצוה גמורה, אלא חייב לשמח העניים והאמיללים: שנאמר "והלוי והגר והיתום והאלמנה" (דברים טז, יד)--מאכיל הכול, ומשקן כפי עושרו. ומי שאכל זבחיו, ולא שימח אלו עימו--עליו נאמר "זבחייהם כלחם אונים להם, כל אוכליו ייטמאו: כי לחמם לנפשם" (הושע ט, ד).

[ב:יז] מצוה בלוי יתר מן הכול--לפי שאין לו לא חלק, ולא נחלה, ואין לו מתנות בבשר; לפיכך צריך לזמן לויים על שולחנו לשמחם, או ייתן להם מתנות בשר עם מעשר שלהם, כדי שימצאו בו צורכיהם. וכל העוזב את הלוי מלשמחו, ושיהיה ממנו מעשרותיו ברגלים--עובר בלא תעשה, שנאמר "הישמר לך, פן תעזוב את הלוי" (דברים יב, ט).²⁶

²⁴ *Hilchos Taanis* 5:14.

יד וכן גזרו שלא לנגן בכלי שיר, כולם; וכל מיני זמר, וכל משמיעי קול של שיר--אסור לשמוח בהן, ואסור לשומען: מפני החורבן. ואפילו שירה בפה על היין--אסורה, שנאמר "בשיר, לא ישתו יין" (ישעיהו כד, ט) וכבר נהגו כל ישראל, לומר דברי תושבחות או שיר של הודאות לאל וכיוצא בהן על היין.

²⁵ The Torah's charge to celebrate on festivals mandates that one offer peace-offerings in addition to the festive peace-offerings. These are called the festive celebratory peace-offerings, as Deuteronomy 27:7 states: "You shall rejoice before God, your Lord." Women are obligated in this *mitzvah*.

²⁶ When a person sacrifices festive and celebratory peace-offerings, he should not eat while secluded together with his children and his wife and think he is performing a perfect *mitzvah*. Instead, he is obligated to bring joy to the poor and unfortunate. Thus, Deuteronomy 16:14 mentions "the Levite, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow." One should grant them food and drink according to his wealth. If one partook of his sacrifices and did not bring joy to these together with him, to him are applied the words of censure, *Hoshea* 9:4: "Their sacrifices will be like the bread of those aggrieved for them, of which all who partake of it become impure. Instead, let their bread be for themselves."

The *mitzvah* to give the Levite takes precedence over all the others, because he is not granted a portion and an ancestral heritage, nor is he given portions of the sacrificial meat. Therefore, one must invite Levites to one's table and have them celebrate or give them presents of meat together with the tithes that are given

The *mitzvah* is a spiritual one. The owner brings his sacrifice to the Beis HaMikdash and does *smicha* on his *korban*—putting his hands on the animal before it is slaughtered and saying words of praise to G-d.²⁷ Moreover, the very eating cannot be selfish, for then כל זבחייהם כלחם אונים להם, כל אוכליו ייטמאו. The very eating of the *korban* is a form of *avodah*. Rambam explains this in the *mitzvah* of אכילת קדשים, eating *kodshim*.

ספר המצוות, מצות עשה

[פט] הציווי שנצטוו הכהנים לאכל בשר הקדשים, כלומר: החטאת והאשם שהם קדש קדשים. והוא אמרו יתעלה: "ואכלו אתם אשר כפר בהם" (שמות כט, לג). ולשון ספרא "מנין שאכילת קדשים כפרה על כל ישראל? תלמוד לומר: 'ואתה נתן לכם לשאת את עוון העדה לכפר עליהם לפני ה' (ויקרא י, יז), הא כיצד? הכהנים אוכלין וישראל מתכפרין".

... אבל שאר הקודשים, כלומר: קודשים קלים, נאכלים לשני ימים ולילה אחד, וגם הנשים אוכלות קודשים קלים אלו. וגם אכילתם נגררת למצווה. וכן גם התרומה אכילתה נגררת למצווה, אלא שאין אכילת קדשים קלים ותרומה כאכילת בשר חטאת ואשם. לפי שאכילת בשר חטאת ואשם נשלמת בה כפרת המתכפר כמו שביארנו, ובהן נאמר הציווי על האכילה - מה שלא נאמר לא בקדשים קלים ולא בתרומה - ולפיכך הם נגררים אחר אלו והאוכלם עשה מצווה. ולשון ספרא: "עבדת מתנה אתן את כהנתכם" (במדבר יח, ז) – "לעשות אכילת קדשים בגבולין כעבודת מקדש במקדש: מה עבודת מקדש במקדש ידיו ואחר כך עובד, אף אכילת קדשים בגבולין מקדש ידיו ואחר כך אוכל".²⁸

to them, so that all their needs are met. Whoever forsakes a Levite, refrains from bringing him joy, and delays giving him the tithes during the festivals violates a negative commandment, as Deuteronomy 12:19 states: "Beware lest you abandon the Levite."

²⁷ *Hilchos Maaseh HaKorbanos* 3:16.

²⁸ That is that He commanded the priests to eat the meat of consecrated animals—meaning the sin-offering and the guilt-offering, which are the most consecrated of the consecrated (*kodshei kodshim*). And that is His saying, "And they shall eat those with which they atoned" (Exodus 29:33). And the language of the [Sifra] (*Sifra*, *Shemini*, Chapter 2:4) is, "From where [do we know] that the eating of offerings is atonement? [Hence] we learn to say, 'and it, has He given to you to forgive the sin of the congregation' (Leviticus 10:17). How is this? Priests eat and the owners are atoned for." And from the stipulations of this commandment—and that is the eating that is the commandment—is, however, that it be for the day and the night, until midnight. And afterwards, the eating of that sin-offering or guilt-offering is forbidden. Indeed, the commandment of eating is for a limited time. And women are not obligated in it, since women do not eat the most consecrated of the consecrated, about which the verse appears. However, the other consecrated foods, meaning the less consecrated of the consecrated (*kodshim kalim*), are eaten for two days and a night—except for the thanksgiving-offering and the ram of the nazirite, which are for one day and the night

Even the eating of *shlamim* in Yerushalayim has an element of *avodah* attached to it. This is the fullest fulfillment of שמחת יו"ט, a joint experience of לכם and לה'.

We have already seen Rambam's presentation in *Hilchos Yom Tov*. Let us take a broader look at it within its full context:

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות שביתת יום טוב

[ו: טז] שבעת ימי הפסח ושמונת ימי החג עם שאר ימים טובים, כולם אסורים בספד ותענית. וחייב אדם להיות בהן שמח וטוב לב, הוא ובניו ואשתו ובני ביתו וכל הנלווים עליו, שנאמר "ושמחת, בחגך..." (דברים טז, יד). אף על פי שהשמחה האמורה כאן, היא קרבן שלמים כמו שאנו מבארין בהלכות חגיגה, יש בכלל אותה שמחה, לשמוח הוא ובניו ובני ביתו כל אחד ואחד בראוי לו.

[ו: יז] כיצד: הקטנים, נותן להם קליות ואגוזים ומגדנות; והנשים, קונה להן בגדים ותכשיט כפי ממונו; והאנשים, אוכלין בשר ושותין יין, שאין שמחה אלא בבשר, ואין שמחה אלא ביין. וכשהוא אוכל ושותה, חייב להאכיל לגר ליתום ולאלמנה עם שאר העניים האמיללים. אבל מי שנועל דלתות חצרו ואוכל ושותה הוא ובניו ואשתו, ואינו מאכיל ומשקה לעניים ולמרי נפש--אין זו שמחת מצוה, אלא שמחת כרסו. ועל אלו נאמר "זבחייהם כלחם אונים להם, כל אוכליו ייטמאו: כי לחמם לנפשם" (הושע ט, ד); ושמחה כזו קלון היא להם, שנאמר "וזירתי פרש על פניכם, פרש חגיכם" (מלאכי ב, ג).

[ו: יח] אף על פי שאכילה ושתיה במועדות בכלל מצות עשה, לא יהיה אוכל ושותה כל היום כולו--אלא כך היא הדת: בבוקר משכימין כל העם לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות, ומתפללין וקוראין בתורה בעניין היום; וחוזרין לבתייהם, ואוכלין. והולכין לבתי מדרשות, קורין ושונים עד חצי היום; ואחר חצי היום, מתפללין תפילת המנחה, וחוזרין לבתייהם לאכול ולשתות, שאר היום עם הלילה.

until midnight, even though they are of the less consecrated of the consecrated. And women also eat from the less consecrated of the consecrated. And its eating is also an extension of the commandment; likewise is the eating of the priestly tithe an extension of the commandment. However, the eating of the less consecrated of the consecrated and of priestly tithes is not like the eating of the meat of the sin-offering and the guilt-offering. For the atonement of the penitent is completed with the eating of this meat from the sin-offering and the guilt-offering, as we explained; and the language of the command is about their eating, which is not the case with the less consecrated of the consecrated and priestly tithes. And therefore it is [only] an extension of the commandment; but one who eats them does a commandment. And the language of the *Sifrei* (*Sifrei BaMidbar* 116:2) is 'I give you your priesthood as a service of gift' (Numbers 18:7)—to make the eating of consecrated items in the [outer] limits like the Temple service in the Temple: Just like for the service of the Temple, he washes his hands and then eats; so too does he wash his hands and then eat the consecrated items [outside the Temple]. And the laws of this commandment have already been explained in *Zevachim*.

[ו:יט] כשאדם אוכל ושותה ושמה ברגל, לא יימשך ביין ובשחוק ובקלות ראש ויאמר שכל שיוסיף בזה ירבה במצוה, שהשכרות והשחוק הרבה וקלות הראש, אינה שמחה אלא הוללות וסכלות. ולא נצטוונו על ההוללות והסכלות, אלא על השמחה שיש בה עבודת יוצר הכול, שנאמר "תחת, אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלוך, בשמחה, ובטוב לבב" (דברים כח, מז), הא למדת שהעבודה בשמחה. ואי אפשר לעבוד את ה'--לא מתוך שחוק, ולא מתוך קלות ראש, ולא מתוך שכרות.

[ו:כ] חייבין בית דין להעמיד שוטרים ברגלים, שיהיו מסבבין ומחפשין בגינות ובפרדסים ועל הנהרות, כדי שלא יתקבצו לאכול ולשתות שם אנשים ונשים, ויבואו לידי עבירה. וכן יזהירו על דבר זה לכל העם, כדי שלא יתערבו אנשים ונשים בבתים לשמחה, ולא יימשכו ביין, שמא יבואו לידי עבירה.²⁹

²⁹ It is forbidden to fast or recite eulogies on the seven days of Pesach, the eight days of Succos, and the other holidays. On these days, a person is obligated to be happy and in good spirits; he, his children, his wife, the members of his household, and all those who depend on him, as [Deuteronomy 16:14] states: "And you shall rejoice in your festivals." The "rejoicing" mentioned in the verse refers to sacrificing peace offerings, as will be explained in *Hilchos Chagigah*. Nevertheless, included in [this charge to] rejoice is that he, his children, and the members of his household should rejoice, each one in a manner appropriate for him. What is implied? Children should be given roasted seeds, nuts, and sweets. For women, one should buy attractive clothes and jewelry according to one's financial capacity. Men should eat meat and drink wine, for there is no happiness without partaking of meat, nor is there happiness without partaking of wine. When a person eats and drinks [in celebration of a holiday], he is obligated to feed converts, orphans, widows, and others who are destitute and poor. In contrast, a person who locks the gates of his courtyard and eats and drinks with his children and his wife, without feeding the poor and the embittered, is [not indulging in] rejoicing associated with a *mitzvah*, but rather the rejoicing of his gut. And with regard to such a person [the verse, Hoshea 9:4] is applied: "Their sacrifices will be like the bread of mourners, all that partake thereof shall become impure, for they [kept] their bread for themselves alone." This happiness is a disgrace for them, as [implied by Malachi 2:3]: "I will spread dung on your faces, the dung of your festival celebrations."

Although eating and drinking on the holidays are included in the positive commandment [to rejoice], one should not devote the entire day to food and drink. The following is the desired practice:

In the morning, the entire people should get up and attend the synagogues and the houses of study where they pray and read a portion of the Torah pertaining to the holiday. Afterwards, they should return home and eat. Then they should go to the house of study, where they read [from the Written Law] and review [the Oral Law] until noon.

After noon, they should recite the afternoon service and return home to eat and drink for the remainder of the day until nightfall.

When a person eats, drinks, and celebrates on a festival, he should not let himself become overly drawn to drinking wine, mirth, and levity, saying, "whoever indulges in these activities more is increasing [his observance of] the *mitzvah* of

Indeed, the idea of sharing with others applies most intensively to wife and children and this is the focus in *Hilchos Yom Tov* and *אשה בעלה*, “that the husband must make his wife happy” is part of this idea—family happiness—*nachas*.

The *Avodah* of *Simchah*

Even as we step away from Yerushalayim, there still is an insistence that the *simchah* be a form of *avodah*. Therefore, not only is inclusion of others mandated lest it be *לחם אונים*, but also *שכרות*, drunkenness, must be avoided. Additionally, there is a quality of *פרישות מהאשה*, precautions regarding mixing of the sexes. In the Mikdash there is a prohibition of *שתויי יין*, “having drunk wine before doing *avodah*” that applies even in time of *simchah*; thus here, even as we have expanded the concept to *שמחה*, כל מיני *שמחה*, still we must retain the character of *avodah*, forbidding drunkenness and conduct that could lead to inappropriate actions.

Rambam thus incorporates the *חצי לה'* including the *tefillah* and *talmud Torah* into the concept of *simchah* and we are to understand that he held that *כולור לה'* was not in conflict with the concept of *simchah*. The spiritual is one of the features of *simchah*. Fittingly, he concludes as well with warning of the dangers of mixing of the sexes. We should note as well that this danger that precipitated the making of a balcony for women in the Mikdash only existed at the time of *השואבה*.³⁰ The quality of *avodah* must co-exist with any form of *simchah*. Indeed, the emotions are to be aroused but they must be properly channeled.

rejoicing.” For drunkenness, profuse mirth, and levity are not rejoicing; they are frivolity and foolishness.

And we were not commanded to indulge in frivolity or foolishness, but rather in rejoicing that involves the service of the Creator of all existence. Thus, [Deuteronomy 28:47] states, “Because you did not serve God, Your Lord, with happiness and a glad heart with an abundance of prosperity.” This teaches us that service [of God] involves joy. And it is impossible to serve God while in the midst of levity, frivolity, or drunkenness.

The [Jewish] court is obligated to appoint officers who will circulate [among the people] on the festivals and check the gardens, orchards, and riverbanks to see that men and women do not gather there to eat or to drink, lest they [conduct themselves immodestly and come to] sin.

Similarly, they must warn the people that men and women should not mix at festive gatherings in homes, nor should they overindulge in wine, lest they be led to sin.

³⁰ I thus find it difficult to see why this separation is considered the source for requiring separate seating during *tefillah*.

Interestingly, Rambam starts *Sefer Zmanim* with the verse נחלתי (תהילים קיט, קיא) "I inherited your statutes forever for they are the joy of my heart." The *sefer* is centered around *simchah*. Although we have seen that the central concept of *simchah* is related to לפני ה' and thus the *mitzvah* is cataloged in *Sefer Avodah*,³¹ still, the fuller concept not only applies even away from Mikdash but remains central to the observance of Yamim Tovim even in *galus*. In *Moreh Ha-Nevuchim* (3:43), Rambam says that a primary reason for the Yamim Tovim is to fulfill the human need for *simchah*.

A Greater Simchah

In *Sefer HaMitzvos*, Rambam refers to a שמחה יתרה, "a greater *simchah*," that only applies in the Mikdash. Thus, we would expect it to be detailed in *Hilchos Chagigah* within *Sefer Avodah*, where the *mitzvah* of *simchah* is recorded in its heading, perhaps alongside *Hilchos Hakbel*, another unique *mitzvah* that only applies in the Mikdash. Yet it is found at the end of *Hilchos Succos V'Lulav*.³² On the other hand, perhaps it is not so surprising as in fact Succos is זמן שמחתנו, "the time of our happiness," an entire Yom Tov devoted to *simchah*.

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות שופר וסוכה ולולב

[ח:יב] אף על פי שכל המועדות מצוה לשמוח בהן, בחג הסוכות הייתה שם במקדש שמחה יתרה, שנאמר "ושמחתם, לפני ה' אלוהיכם--שבעת ימים" (ויקרא כג, מ). כיצד היו עושין: ערב יום טוב הראשון היו מתקנין במקדש מקום לנשים מלמעלה ולאנשים מלמטה, כדי שלא יתערבו אלו עם אלו. ומתחילין לשמוח ממוצאי יום טוב הראשון; וכן בכל יום ויום מימי חולו של מועד, מתחילין מאחר שיקריבו תמיד של בין הערביים, לשמוח שאר היום, עם כל הלילה.

[ח:יג] והיאך הייתה שמחה זו: החליל מכה, ומנגנין בכינור ובנבלים ובמצלתיים, וכל אחד ואחד, בכלי שיר שהוא יודע לנגן בו; ומי שיודע בפה, בפה. ורוקדין ומספקין ומטפחין ומפזזין ומכרכרין כל אחד ואחד כמו שיודע, ואומרים דברי שיר ותושבחות. ושמחה זו אינה דוחה לא את השבת, ולא את יום טוב.

[ח:יד] מצוה, להרבות בשמחה זו. ולא היו עושין אותה עמי הארץ, וכל מי שירצה--אלא גדולי חכמי ישראל וראשי הישיבות והסנהדרין והחסידים והזקנים ואנשי מעשה, הם שהיו מרקדין ומספקין ומנגנין ושמחין במקדש בימי חג הסוכות; אבל כל העם, האנשים והנשים--כולן באין לראות, ולשמוע:

[ח:טו] שהשמחה שישמח אדם בעשיית המצוות ובאהבת האל שציווה בהן, עבודה גדולה היא; וכל המונע עצמו משמחה זו, ראוי להיפרע ממנו, שנאמר "תחת, אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלוהיך, בשמחה, ובטוב לבב" (דברים כח, מז). וכל המגיס דעתו,

³¹ The *mitzvah* itself is listed in the כותרת to *Hilchos Chagigah* with *Sefer Avodah*, not within *Sefer Zmanim*.

³² Actually, שופר סוכה ולולב, הלכות.

והולק כבוד לעצמו, ומתכבד בעיניו במקומות אלו--חוטא, ושוטה. ועל זה הזהיר שלמה, ואמר "אל תתהדר, לפני מלך" (משלי כה,ו).
[ח:טז] וכל המשפיל עצמו, ומקל גופו במקומות אלו--הוא הגדול המכובד, העובד מאהבה. וכן דויד מלך ישראל אומר "ונקלותי עוד מזאת, והייתי שפל בעיני" (שמואל ב,ו,כב). ואין הגדולה והכבוד אלא לשמוח לפני ה', שנאמר "והמלך דויד מפזז ומכרכר לפני ה'" (ראה שמואל ב,ו,טז).³³

³³ Even though it is a *mitzvah* to rejoice on all the festivals, there was an additional celebration in the Temple on the festival of Succos, as [Leviticus 23:40] commands: "And you shall rejoice before God, your Lord, for seven days." What was done? On the eve of the first day of the festival, they would set up a place in the Temple where women [could watch] from above, and men from below, so they would not intermingle with each other. The celebration would begin on the night after the first day of the festival. Similarly, on each day of Chol HaMo'ed, after offering the daily afternoon sacrifice, they would begin to celebrate for the rest of the day and throughout the night. What was the nature of this celebration? The flute would be sounded and songs played on the harp, lute, and cymbals. [In addition,] each person would play on the instrument which he knew. Those who could sing, would sing. They would dance and clap their hands, letting loose and whistling, each individual in the manner which he knew. Words of song and praise were recited. This celebration does not supersede either the Shabbos or the festival [prohibitions]. It is a great *mitzvah* to maximize this celebration. The common people and anyone who desired would not perform [in these celebrations]; only the greatest of Israel's wise men: the *Roshei Yeshivos*, the members of the high court, the pious, the elders, and the men of stature. They were those who would dance, clap their hands, sing, and rejoice in the Temple on the days of the festival of Succos. However, the entire people—the men and the women—would come to see and hear. The happiness with which a person should rejoice in the fulfillment of the *mitzvos* and the love of God Who commanded them is a great service. Whoever holds himself back from this rejoicing is worthy of retribution, as [Deuteronomy 28:47] states: "...because you did not serve God, your Lord, with happiness and a glad heart." Whoever holds himself proud, giving himself honor, and acts haughtily in such situations is a sinner and a fool. Concerning this, Solomon warned [Proverbs 28:10]: "Do not seek glory before the King." [In contrast,] anyone who lowers himself and thinks lightly of his person in these situations is [truly] a great person, worthy of honor, who serves God out of love. Thus, David, King of Israel, declared [II Samuel 6:22]: "I will hold myself even more lightly esteemed than this and be humble in my eyes," because there is no greatness or honor other than celebrating before God, as [II Samuel 6:16] states: "King David was dancing wildly and whistling before God."

This *avodah* is especially unique as *avodah* in general is proscribed, not left to individuality.³⁴ It is dangerous for one to impose one's own emotion as this is the root of *Avodah Zarah* and thus only special people did these acts and transmitted to the people the art and emotion and feeling that was authentic. Unlike the opinion of others, שמחת בית השואבה is not related to נסוך המים "the pouring of the water ceremony," and the term שמחת בית השואבה refers to a place in the Mikdash. Rambam's *girsā* is שאובה and the underlying concept is that stated by Chazal of רוח הקדש "from there we draw the holy spirit."³⁵

The Simchah of Mitzvos

Rambam here makes reference as well to the *simchah* mandated in the performance of all *mitzvos*: "The happiness with which a person should rejoice in the fulfillment of the *mitzvos* and the love of G-d Who commanded them is a great service. Whoever holds himself back from this rejoicing is worthy of retribution, as [Deuteronomy 28:47] states: "...because you did not serve G-d, your Lord, with happiness and a glad heart." He refers to this *simchah* in *Hilchos Teshuvah* as well:

משנה תורה, ספר המדע, הלכות תשובה
[ט:ד] הקדוש ברוך הוא נתן לנו תורה זו, עץ החיים, וכל העושה כל הכתוב בה, ויודעו דעה גמורה נכונה--זוכה בה לחיי העולם הבא; ולפי גודל מעשיו וגודל חכמתו, הוא זוכה. והבטיחנו בתורה שאם נעשה אותה בשמחה ובטובת נפש, ונהגה בחכמתה תמיד--שיסיר ממנו כל הדברים המונעים אותנו מלעשותה, כגון חולי ומלחמה ורעב וכיוצא בהן. וישפיע לנו כל הטובות המחזקים את ידינו לעשות את התורה, כגון שובע ושלוש ורבות כסף וזהב--כדי שלא נעסוק כל ימינו בדברים שהגוף צריך להן, אלא נשב פנויים ללמוד בחכמה, ולעשות המצוה, כדי שנזכה לחיי העולם הבא. וכן הוא אומר בתורה אחר שהבטיח בטובות העולם הזה, "וצדקה, תהיה לנו..." (דברים ו, כ).

[ט:ה] וכן הודיענו בתורה שאם נעזוב התורה מדעתנו ונעסוק בהבלי הזמן, כעניין שנאמר "וישמך ישורון ויבעט" (דברים לב, טו)--שדיין האמת יסיר מן העוזבים כל טובות העולם הזה, שהן חיזקו ידיהם לבעוט, ומביא עליהן כל הרעות המונעים אותן מלקנות העולם הבא, כדי שיאבדו ברשעם. הוא שכתוב בתורה, "ועבדת את אויבך, אשר ישלחנו ה' בך" (דברים כח, מח) "תחת, אשר לא עבדת את ה'" (דברים כח, מז).

³⁴ See David Guttman, "Avodah Zarah as Falsehood—Denial of Reality and Rejection of Science," *Hakirah*, volume 6.

³⁵ See *Peirush HaMishnah, Succah* 5:1 and *TB Succah* 50b.

[ט:ו] נמצא פירוש כל אותן הברכות והקללות, על דרך זו: כלומר אם עבדתם את ה' בשמחה, ושמרתם דרכו--משפיע לכם הברכות האלו ומרחיק הקללות...³⁶

The Time of our Happiness

This explains why *Succos* which is identified as *זמן שמחתנו* merits its own Yom Tov on a par with the two other Yamim Tovim which are bound to the fundamental concepts of *geulah* (*Pesach*) and *Torah* (*Shavuot*). With the *geulah* and the choosing of Israel on Pesach our nation was formed and became connected to G-d the *עם סגולה*, and then when the Torah was given to us we were given the tools to enable us to pursue *ידעת ה' – אנכי*, “the knowledge of G-d.” The last step on man’s ladder to spiritual ascension is with *Succos* with *שמחה*, a function of *אהבה*, love of G-d.³⁷

³⁶ G-d gave us this Torah, the tree of life. Whoever fulfills what is written within it and comprehends it with complete and proper knowledge will merit the life of the World to Come. A person merits a portion of the World to Come according to the magnitude of his deeds and the extent of his knowledge. In addition, we are promised by the Torah that if we fulfill it with joy and good spirit and meditate on its wisdom at all times, G-d will remove all the obstacles which prevent us from fulfilling it, for example, sickness, war, famine, and the like. Similarly, He will grant us all the good which will reinforce our performance of the Torah, such as plenty, peace, an abundance of silver and gold in order that we not be involved throughout all our days in matters required by the body, but rather, will sit unburdened and thus, have the opportunity to study wisdom and perform *mitzvos* in order that we will merit the life of the World to Come. This principle is expressed by the Torah. After Deuteronomy 6:11–12 promises us all the benefits of this world, it concludes (*ibid.* :25): “And charity will remain for us if we take care to perform all these commandments.” Similarly, the Torah has informed us that if we consciously abandon the Torah and become obsessed with fleeting, temporal vanities in a manner similar to that stated by Deuteronomy 32:15: “Jeshurun became fat and rebelled,” then, the True Judge will remove from those who abandon the Torah all the benefits of this world which had reinforced that abandonment. He will bring upon them all the evils which prevent them from acquiring a portion in the World to Come so that they will be destroyed in their wickedness. This was implied by the Torah’s statement (Deuteronomy 28:47–48): “Because you did not serve G-d, your Lord, with happiness... you will serve your enemies whom G-d sends against you.” Thus, these blessings and curses can be interpreted as follows: If you serve G-d with happiness and observe His way, He will grant you these blessings and remove these curses from you in order that you may be free to gain wisdom from the Torah and involve yourselves in it so that you will merit the life of the World to Come.

³⁷ See *Hilchos Teshuvah*, Perek 10.

Rambam did not put **שמחת בית השואבה** in *Sefer Avodah* but rather in *Hilchos Succah V'Lulan*, because indeed this celebration is the heart of the Yom Tov of Succos and this quality must remain with it even in *galus*. On Succos we must dedicate ourselves to that *avodah* of *simchah* which is to be exercised in the performance of *mitzvos*. We are to feel privileged to have been given these *mitzvos* and we must demonstrate it. “Whoever holds himself proud, giving himself honor, and acts haughtily in such situations is a sinner and a fool.” “In such situations” refers to this particular *mitzvah* where we are required to lower ourselves to demonstrate our love of G-d.

Simchah in Galus

However, is the fulfillment of this concept really possible without the Mikdash? It would seem not. Simchas Torah celebration is apparently an attempt to capture these emotions,³⁸ but *Chazal*, in fact, prohibited musical instruments after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash³⁹ with the intent of acknowledging and even embracing the vacuum of spirituality and “*simchah* before G-d” that is the Jew’s lot in *galus*. Did they perhaps provide a substitute? In one place they are explicit that a change in the *mitzvah* of *simchas Yom Tov* does exist. In *Sefer HaMitzvos* (*aseh* 54), Rambam quotes Rebbe Yehudah ben Beseira saying that while in the time of the Mikdash meat of the *korbanos* was necessary for *simchah*, in the time of its destruction wine was necessary for *simchah*.

In the last chapters of *Sefer Zmanim*, Rambam presents the *Yamim Tovim d'Rabbanan*. They have no *kedushah*, i.e., no prohibition of work, but do have elements of *simchas Yom Tov*. Purim is specifically a day of celebration, **ימי משתה ושמחה**, “days of drinking (partying) and *simchah*” with **שמחה** preceding **משתה**:

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות מגילה וחנוכה

[ב:יד] מצות יום ארבעה עשר לבני כפרים ועיירות, ויום חמישה עשר לבני כרכים--להיות **ימי משתה ושמחה**, ומשלוח מנות לריעים ומתנות לאביונים. ומותר, בעשיית מלאכה; ואף על פי כן, אין ראוי לעשות בו מלאכה: אמרו חכמים, כל העושה מלאכה ביום פורים, אינו רואה סימן ברכה.
[ב:טז] כיצד חובת סעודה זו--שיאכל בשר ויתקן סעודה נאה, כפי אשר תמצא ידו; ושותה יין, עד שישתכר ויירדם בשכרות.

³⁸ The halachic grounds for dancing on Simchas Torah are unclear. Rav Hai Gaon was asked about it and answers that its accepted practice demonstrates that it is permitted. See *She'eilos U'Teshuvos Maharik, Siman* 9. Rambam makes no mention of it.

³⁹ See *Hilchos Taanis, Perek* 5.

[ב:יט] מוטב לאדם להרבות במתנות אביונים, מלהרבות בסעודתו ובשלוח לריעיו-- שאין שם שמחה גדולה ומפוארה, אלא לשמח לב עניים ויתומים ואלמנות וגרים, שהמשמח לב האמיללים האלו מידמה בשכינה, שנאמר "להחיות רוח שפלים, ולהחיות לב נדכאים" (ישעיהו נז, טו).⁴⁰

Here, in fact, we see a new concept of *simchah*. Strikingly, the overindulgence in wine that is anathema to *avodah* is here, in fact, a central feature, and here Rambam does not even warn us about taking precautions against the mixing of the sexes. In the *simchah* that the Rabbis mandated in their creation of a Yom Tov in *galus*, we transition from the primacy of *שלמות הנפש*, “completeness of the soul,” to that of *שלמות הגוף*, “completeness of the body.”⁴¹ The joy is not from being *לפני ה'*, “before G-d” but rather from *לדמות לשכינה*, “to be comparable to the *Shechinah*”—via the emotional empathy of giving. Earlier, in explaining the Torah *mitzvah* of eating the *korban simchah*, Rambam spoke of the negative quality of doing so in a selfish manner, not including the poor in sharing in one’s *simchah*, *אין זו שמחת מצוה, אלא שמחת כרסו*, “This is not the *simchah* of *mitzvah* but the joy of the stomach.” Here, however, *Chazal* added a new idea, that one’s compassion is itself the *avodah*. While this is an outgrowth of the Torah concept of *simchah* that is *avodah*, here it has been changed to making the giving to others central. Perhaps in *galus* with no Mikdash for inspiration—as Rambam says that there is no prophecy now because of the sadness that came with the destruction of the Mikdash⁴²—it was necessary to make the joy of friendship the genesis of *simchah*.

⁴⁰ It is a *mitzvah* for the inhabitants of the villages and unwalled cities to consider the fourteenth of Adar—and for the inhabitants of the walled cities to consider the fifteenth of Adar—as a day of happiness and festivity, when portions of food are sent to one’s friends and presents are given to the poor. It is permitted to work on these days. It is not, however, proper to do so. Our Sages declared, “Whoever works on Purim will never see a sign of blessing.” ... What is the nature of our obligation for this feast? A person should eat meat and prepare as attractive a feast as his means permit. He should drink wine until he becomes intoxicated and falls asleep in a stupor.... It is preferable for a person to be more liberal with his donations to the poor than to be lavish in his preparation of the Purim feast or in sending portions to his friends. For there is no greater and more splendid happiness than to gladden the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows, and the converts. One who brings happiness to the hearts of these unfortunate individuals resembles the Divine Presence, which Isaiah 57:15 describes as having the tendency “to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive those with broken hearts.”

⁴¹ *Moreh HaNevuchim* 3:27.

⁴² *Moreh HaNevuchim* 2:36.

It is worth noting also Rambam's selection of the term מפואר. On the one hand, the word is reminiscent of (ישעיהו מט,ג): עבדי אתה--ישראל, אשר: the servant of Hashem who Rambam writes of in *Hilchos De'os* (5:28) and *Yesodei HaTorah* (5:15). This personality sanctifies the name of G-d, for as G-d's emissary his actions of emulating G-d's 13 Middos of Mercy glorifies the name of G-d in the eyes of the world. In *galus*, the *simchah* of sharing and the personality of the עבד ה' stand in the place of the experience of the Mikdash where the *Kobanim* had served wearing בגדי קודש... לכבוד ולתפארת (שמות כח:ב).

Rambam ends *Sefer Zmanim* with yet one more Yom Tov d'Rabbanan.

משנה תורה, ספר זמנים, הלכות מגילה וחנוכה
[ג:ג] ומפני זה התקינו חכמים שבאותו הדור, שיהיו שמונת הימים האלו שתחילתן מלילי חמישה ועשרים בכסליו, ימי שמחה והלל ומדליקין בהן הנרות בערב על פתחי הבתים, בכל לילה ולילה משמונת הלילות. וימים אלו, הן הנקראין חנוכה. והן אסורין בספד ותענית, כימי הפורים; והדלקת הנרות בהן, מצוה מדברי סופרים כקריאת המגילה.⁴³

With Chanukah, we have yet another added concept of *simchah*. Rambam compares it to Purim in the prohibition of eulogizing and fasting, but it differs in other respects. While a day of *simchah*, it is not a day of *משתה*, partying/drinking. In contrast to Purim where the Rabbinic *simchah* centered around the community was added for the *galus* experience, here the *mitzvah* of *simchah* centers on the spiritual. ימי שמחה והלל ומדליקין בהן “days of *simchah* and *Hallel* and of lighting candles.” The character of this *simchah* is in the הלל and lighting of candles. The שירה, singing, of the Mikdash was extended to the communities, where it would remain even after the destruction of the Mikdash. Although the שירה of the Mikdash that required musical instruments was prohibited after the *Churban*, the concept of שירה was to be retained in שירת הלל. Rambam details the halachos of *Hallel* here in *Hilchos Chanukah* as the *mitzvah* is a companion to Chanukah. The decision to make it a *mitzvah* on all Yamim Tovim was a part of the decision to institute the Yom Tov of Chanukah.⁴⁴ The lights, as well, emulate the lights of *בית השואבה*, “And there were four basins made of gold at the top of each candelabrum. And there were four

⁴³ Accordingly, the Sages of that generation ordained that these eight days, which begin from the twenty-fifth of Kislev, should be commemorated to be days of happiness and praise [of God], and candles are lit in the evening at the entrance to the houses on each and every one of these eight nights. These days are called Chanukah. It is forbidden to eulogize and fast on them, as on the days of Purim.

⁴⁴ In recording the prohibition of music after the *Churban*, Rambam brings the *minhag* to sing תשבחות over יין.

ladders for each and every pole and there were four children from the priesthood trainees, and in their hands were pitchers with a capacity of 120 *log* of oil that they would pour into each and every basin. And the light from the candelabra was so bright that there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illuminated from the light of the Place of the Drawing of the Water.” (*Mishnah Succah* 5:1)

The *Simchah* of the Giving of the Torah

The Gemara in *Pesachim* also discusses the disagreement between Rav Yehoshua and Rav Eliezer about לכם vs. לה' and adds that there are cases in which they agree:

בבלי פסחים סח:

א"ר אלעזר הכל מודים בעצרת דבעינן נמי לכם מ"ט יום שניתנה בו תורה הוא
אמר רבה הכל מודים בשבת דבעינן נמי לכם מ"ט וקראת לשבת עונג אמר רב
יוסף הכל מודים בפורים דבעינן נמי לכם מ"ט ימי משתה ושמחה כתיב ביה.⁴⁵

With regard to Shabbos, we have confirmation of our original point that in the *mitzvah* of *Oneg Shabbos* there must be לכם, thus all agree that three special *seudos* are mandated. According to our understanding, the relevance is also to Yom Tov as there is a principle of *Oneg Shabbos* within every Yom Tov. With regard to Purim, as well, this fits our understanding that Purim was instituted especially as a material-based and community-based Yom Tov for the *galus*.

With regard to יום שנתנה בו תורה, “the day on which the Torah was given,” this position would seem surprising. On the day dedicated to Torah, the concept of כולו לה' is not operable. On other Yamim Tovim, Rav Eliezer wished the day to be devoted to learning, but yet on this day he apparently agrees with Rav Yehoshua that לכם, material enjoyment, must also be part of the celebration.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Rabbi Elazar said: All agree with regard to *Atzeres*, the holiday of Shavuot, that we require that it be also “for you,” meaning that it is a *mitzvah* to eat, drink, and rejoice on that day. What is the reason? It is the day on which the Torah was given, and one must celebrate the fact that the Torah was given to the Jewish people. Rabba said: All agree with regard to Shabbos that we require that it be also “for you.” What is the reason? Because the verse states: “If you proclaim Shabbos a delight, the sacred day of God honored” (Isaiah 58:13). Rav Yosef said: All agree with regard to Purim that we require that it be also “for you.” What is the reason? Because it is written: “To observe them as days of feasting and gladness” (Esther 9:22).

⁴⁶ A source for this position may be in the verse (Exodus 24:11) ויחזו את האלקים גמרו ויאכלו וישתו, which, in fact, Ramban uses as a source for having a *seudah* at

The explanation must however be that the day of מתן תורה was not the day of למיד התורה, learning the Torah. It was the day the *mitzvos* were given to Israel and the day they became obligated in them. Rambam repeatedly explains that the *mitzvos* of the Torah create within us שלמות הגוף, physical and emotional perfection, and שלמות הנפש, intellectual perfection. The *simchah* of this day must incorporate both aspects. Moreover, the day the Torah was given differs from other Yamim Tovim in that the principle of שמחה לכל אחד במה שראוי להם, “*simchah* for each according to what is fitting for them” needs some modification on this day. As Bnei Yisrael stood at the foot of the mountain, *Chazal* emphasize כאיש אחד בלב אחד.⁴⁷ The Torah was given to the nation as a whole, not just to the *Zekeinim*. On this day, it would not be appropriate for the *simchah* to be experienced differently by different groups. Just as all must experience the spiritual happiness, they must experience the physical happiness, and on this day, the same experience should be בלב אחד, shared by all. ❧

של תורה. But Onkelos reads the ויאכלו וישתו to mean that they enjoyed it as if אכלו ושתו. More relevant to us is Rambam’s opinion (*Moreh HaNevuchim* 1:5) that this was their flaw that they turned their vision of G-d into something material. Rambam’s opinion is consistent with *Chazal* that the *Zekeinim* were ultimately punished for this.

⁴⁷ See *Rashi*, Exodus 19:2.