

**The Mitzvah of Simcha and Sharing with Others on Pesach**  
**from Rav Moshe Feinstein,zt"l**  
**by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh**

On Yom Tov there is a mitzvah of simcha. On a certain level, the mitzvah is subjective. Chazal tell us in the Gemara Pesachim 109A that this simcha is defined by age and gender. For men, simcha is most felt by meat and wine. For women, new clothes bring about simcha. For children, the Gemara states that simcha is expressed by receiving nuts and roasted wheat kernels which can perhaps be extended in our times to other confections. In the Bais Hamikdash, however the Gemara states that the mitzvah of simcha was fulfilled by eating the meat of korbonos that were brought specially for the Yom Tov. Now that we, unfortunately, do not have the Bais Hamikdash the Gemara states that there is no simcha except with wine. How much of an obligation we have today to eat meat on Yom Tov has been a major discussion among poskim throughout the ages. My Rosh yeshiva Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l was particular to have at least a kezayis of red meat and a reviis of wine every day of Yom Tov including Chol Hamoed.

A major aspect of simchas Yom Tov is sharing our simcha with those less fortunate than ourselves. The Torah states in Devarim 16:11 and 16:14 that we have to rejoice. We are told in both verses that the rejoicing is to include our sons, daughters, menservants and maidservants, as well the orphan, widow, stranger, and Levi. Rashi, on verse 11, explains that our four, meaning sons, daughters, menservants and maid servants, correspond to Hashem's four which are the orphan, widow, stranger, and Levi. If we take care of Hashem's four he will take care of our four. A fundamental message of Yom Tov is that our

simcha is not for ourselves alone. As we celebrate crucial events in our history, it is so important that we do not forget the less fortunate. Only when we include them in our grand celebrations of our Yomim Tovim are we really celebrating before Hashem. Only when we are really unified in celebration we can bring the schechina down to us on our Yomim Tovim. This is true of Giving Tzedaka in general, but there is an added aspect to all of this on Yom Tov.

Interestingly, the Torah explicitly states the mitzvah of simcha by Shavuos and Sukkos but not by Pesach. Why does the Torah not state it by Pesach? Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, explained that on Pesach we were all set free from slavery to freedom. Therefore it should be self-understood that Pesach is with the mitzvah of tzedakah. This can be understood in the sense of having the means to celebrate the Yom Tov honorably as well making the poor and unfortunate feel like social equals to ourselves. After all, we all came out of Mitzrayim, rich, poor, and everything in between. On Pesach especially we must realize this idea that we cannot celebrate properly unless we made the effort to facilitate those less fortunate than ourselves in celebrating the Yom Tov. This is, indeed, the basis for our practice Of Maos Chittim.