

כִּי־תָבוֹא

KI TAVO/WHEN YOU COME IN Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8

Our parasha begins with יהוה's prescribed process for giving thanks once the Israelites have entered the Land and settled in it:

Devarim 26:1 "And it shall be, when you come into the land which יהוה your Elohim is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, ² "that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that יהוה your Elohim is giving you, and put it in a basket and go to the place where יהוה your Elohim chooses to make His name abide. ³ "And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to יהוה your Elohim that I have come to the country which יהוה swore to our fathers to give us.'⁴ "Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of יהוה your Elohim. ⁵ "And you shall answer and say before יהוה your Elohim: 'My father was a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶ 'But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. ⁷ 'Then we cried out to יהוה the Elohim of our fathers, and יהוה heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. ⁸ 'So יהוה brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. ⁹ 'He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, "a land flowing with milk and honey"; ¹⁰ 'and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O יהוה, have given me.' Then you shall set it before יהוה your Elohim, and worship before יהוה your Elohim. ¹¹ "So you shall rejoice in every good thing which יהוה your Elohim has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you.

In doing this ritual, the Israelite declares that he is **not ungrateful**. He is **recognizing** not only **where he has come from**, but also the **Almighty** who has **consistently guided** him. **Despite all odds**, because of the **Almighty's kindness and graciousness**, the Israelites were able to **come in and possess the Land**. And as a **conclusion** to this **process**, they are **commanded to "rejoice"!!** Gratitude leads to "joy"! When one sees the **physical fruit of one's labor**, an **appreciation of "יהוה, Elohim of our fathers"**, must be **part of the experience!** If not, then one has **failed** to see יהוה's **enabling role** in all of man's **human accomplishments**.

Man is required to recognize the Almighty in all his endeavors. **Especially** when there is a **step made** in the **completion of the covenant**, an Israelite must **recognize the grace and love** of the **Elohim who directed his paths**. What better symbol existed for the **fulfillment of the covenant** than the **bringing of the fruits of the Land of Promise**. Verse 10 illustrates the **peak of the experience**:

Devarim 26:10 ...Then you shall set it before יהוה your Elohim, and worship before יהוה your Elohim.

Can you imagine what this must have been like? To **stand before His Presence**, with the **evidence** of the **fulfillment of His promises** and to **worship Him there**...it must have been **pure ecstasy**. If the person felt no “**joy**” in this moment, then it was certainly an **indication** that he had **moved away** from יהוה, **despite all the blessings** he had **received**. It was at this point, that the “**joyless person**” **positioned himself to inherit the curses**:

Devarim 28:47 " Because you did not serve יהוה your Elohim with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, ⁴⁸ "therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom יהוה will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.

If we go back to the **beginning of the Torah**, we read that the **very first command** included the **benefit of eating and “enjoying”** all of the **trees of the Garden of Eden**:

Bereshith 2:16 And יהוה Elohim commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

If **Adam and Eve** had “**joyfully**” kept this **first command**, it would have **protected** them from the **desire to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. **Instead**, the **serpent** was able to sneak in the negative emotion of “**ingratitude**” by **enticing them**. What did the serpent actually do? He **drew Adam and Eve away** from their **passion to serve יהוה “joyfully”** by **keeping His command**. When we are able to see the **Almighty’s guiding hand** through **His commands in daily living**, we **fight off the evil generated by the serpent** and his modern day counter-parts.

Thus after a **lengthy listing of frightening curses**, the **Torah** gives the **reason for these terrible punishments** in *Devarim 28:47* – a lack of “**joy and gladness of heart**” on our part in “**serving יהוה your Elohim**.” We must ask the **question**...is it really **possible** to be **happy all of the time**, especially in the **midst** of so much **suffering**? Obviously, there must be a **deeper understanding** of the meaning of “**joy**” and its **relationship** with **His chosen people**.

First, let’s understand that the **first** and the **greatest gift** given to man was “**life**”:

*Bereshith 2:7 And יהוה Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**; and man became a living being.*

Without “**life**”, you can **possess nothing**. Being **alive** is enough **reason** for **expressing “joy”**, regardless of the **negative experiences** one may encounter. With “**life**” comes the **opportunity for “growth”**. In fact, we can connect “**joy**” and “**growth**” through the **Hebrew** as they are **similar and related in meaning**:

- **Joy** - (גִּיּוּחַ - sameach)
- **Growth** - (גִּדּוּחַ - tzameach)

Now we have a whole **new way of looking at “joy”!** We can be **“joyful”** because we know that we are **experiencing “growth”!** What sort of things spark **“growth”** and **“joy”** in an **individual**? Let’s list a few things:

1. **Keeping commandments** – when out of love, one keeps a commandment, he should feel a **“joy”** in being **transformed, sanctified and set apart** to the **Creator of the universe!**
 - a. *1John 5:3 For this is the love of Yah, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*
2. **Study of Torah** – the sages say that **Torah came down** from its **heavenly perch** and **became united with man...**is this not what **Yeshua, the Living Torah, did?** If one viewed the **Torah** as a **Divine gift**, he would be **obsessed with gaining more and more** of it.
 - a. *Psalm 19:7 The Torah of יְהוָה is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of יְהוָה is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸ The statutes of יְהוָה are right, **rejoicing the heart**; The commandment of יְהוָה is pure, enlightening the eyes;*
3. **Confession** – when we **cleans ourselves of sin**, and find the **“joy”** of **salvation**:
 - a. *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
 - b. A **broken heart** finds **“joy”** in **salvation** - *Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O Elohim, ...¹² Restore to me the **joy** of Your salvation...¹⁷ The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart...*
4. **Trials**
 - a. *James 1:2 My brethren, count it all **joy** when you fall into various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, **that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.***
 - b. *Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening seems to be **joyful** for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*
 - c. **Yeshua** set the **example** for us in **enduring trials with “joy”** - *Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Yeshua, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the **joy** that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of Elohim.³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*
5. **Knowing Yeshua** is certainly the **most important reason for “joy”!** Because of **Yeshua**, we are able to **receive spiritual life!** This is the **best reason to “rejoice”!**
 - a. *Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, **rejoice** in Adonai... **rejoice** in Messiah Yeshua, and have no confidence in the flesh...⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Yeshua the Messiah, my Adonai, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Messiah⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the Torah, but that which is through faith in Messiah, the **righteousness which is from Yah by faith**;¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

- b. *1 Peter 1:8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,⁹ receiving the goal of your faith -- the salvation of your souls.*

Why focus so much on serving יהוה with “joy”? It has long been taught that **in order to transmit Torah faith from one generation to the next there must be “joy” while observing commandments.** Think of your own family. **Children are very perceptive.** If they see their parents **keeping a commandment with “joy”**, they will **come to understand** that this is **important**. On the other hand, if they see **indifference or hardship associated with obedience** to the commandments, then **they will not place value on its performance.** They will **not see love for the One who gave the command.** **Without “joy”**, it will be **more difficult** for the **next generation to love their Messiah by keeping His commandments.** Now we can clearly see the **chain reaction.**

Lack of joy leads to disobedience which leads to resultant curses

How about you? Is the **observance of your faith** something that **your children will want to emulate**? Do you **do things** because you **“have to”** or you **“want to”**? **Does your life play out in vivid colors or simply black and white?** The **home** serves as the **greatest and most important training ground** for our **children.**

The **Torah** does **not say** that we have to **walk around with a constant smile on our faces**, regardless of what we’re faced with. It does say, however, that we are to **serve יהוה** with “joy”. The **source of “joy”** is the **ability and opportunity to carry out His command** to be His **servant**. **Yeshua** invited us to **“yoke up” with Him** in this:

Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.²⁹ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

If we are a **“servant”**, then we must **not lose track of our Master** who is **guiding us**. **Our faith should keep us from worry** and allow us to **serve our Master** with “joy”. An author once told the **story of a ship at sea during a fierce storm**. The **passengers** were in **great distress**. After awhile, **one of them**, against captain’s orders, ascended to the deck and **made his way to the pilot**. The **seaman** was at his post, **calmly carrying out his function at the wheel**. When he saw that the **passenger was agitated**, he **gave him a big, reassuring smile**. The **man then returned to the other passengers** with the **following words of comfort**, **“I have seen the face of the pilot, and he smiled. All is well.”**

Sounds like **another storm story** we are familiar with, doesn’t it? **Yeshua admonished his disciples** for **being afraid** in his **Presence**:

Matthew 8:23 Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.²⁴ And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.²⁵ Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Adonai, save us! We are perishing!"²⁶ But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

“Joy” overrides circumstances. Though sometimes hard to understand, we believe in the truth of Romans 8:28:

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love Yah, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

If one realizes that the challenges he encounters in life are directed by the Father and that the Father will be with him throughout the ordeal, he will be able to view his situation through a positive light. Serving the Almighty with “joy” is illustrated in the following story about a bus driver in *Touched by a Story 2*, by Rabbi Yechiel Spero (very slight editing for English understanding):

“The boys were tough, and driving them every day was difficult. The respect they demonstrated for him left something to be desired. It was just not an appropriate job for him anymore. At the end of the month, he approached the principal to inform him of his decision to seek employment elsewhere. The principal, being an understanding man, listened intently and commiserated with the driver. He assured him that he would speak to the boys, and he even offered him a raise for his troubles.

The driver, although appreciative of the raise, said that he had had enough. It was not because of the money. The boys were not really bad. They were just acting in the manner that boys of that age act. He wanted a change, something different, something more relaxing. As they were walking towards the door, the principal made one last attempt, “Would you mind visiting with Rabbi Ben Zion?” The driver agreed, thinking to himself that the great Sephardic rabbi could not say anything to him that would change his mind.

They walked together to the rabbi’s apartment and sat down to talk. The principal explained the predicament: how the bus driver had served the school faithfully for a number of years, and now he had decided that it was time to move on. While it would be a great loss to have to replace him, the bus driver insisted that he could go on no longer. He was emotionally spent, and he badly needed a change of scenery.

It was time for the rabbi to respond. Rabbi Ben Zion’s eyes sparkled with warmth and sensitivity as he looked at the bus driver. In reality, he was focusing on his heart. He said, “My dear friend, you think that you are driving a simple van, but actually you are driving a mobile Holy Ark! The children are not just passengers; they are living Torah books! When you open the door to your mobile Holy Ark, you are being honored by allowing them into the Ark! Each and every child on that van is precious. He is our future!

When the bus driver heard his vocation being interpreted in this way by the great rabbi, he felt ashamed for having been so petty. He assured the rabbi that he would continue performing his function with distinction and esteem. The next morning, the attitude he displayed to his young charges was visibly altered. “Good morning boys,” he greeted them. “Thank you for granting me the privilege to drive you to yeshivah today, so that you can learn Torah.”

As the last boy exited the van he looked up at the driver and said, “Thank you.” The driver smiled and countered, “No, thank you!”

It is all in one's attitude. The opportunity to live and serve Hashem should be our ultimate source of joy." (end of story)

Colossians 3:23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to Adonai and not to men,

Most of our lives contain **enough annoyances** and **problems** to cause us **discomfort**. People are **easily distracted** by the **mundane** and those things that eventually will be **unimportant aspects of daily life**. When things get you down, take **the advice of Sha'ul**:

*Philippians 4:4 **Rejoice** in Adonai always. Again I will say, **rejoice!**⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men. Adonai is at hand.⁶ **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to Yah;**⁷ **and the peace of Yah, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Messiah Yeshua.**⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- **meditate on these things.**⁹ The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the **Elohim of peace will be with you.***

Yeshua gives us the **ultimate reason** for "**rejoicing**"!

*Luke 10:20 ... **rejoice** because your names are written in heaven."*

Baruch HaShem, יהוה!

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle