

Erev Shabbos Parshas Behaaloscha 5780

Is Shabbos a Day of Simcha?

וביום שמחתכם ובמועדיכם ובראשי חדשכם ותקעתם בחצצרת (במדבר י, י)

The Pasuk describes the days that they used to blow the trumpets in the Bais Hamikdash, and the first day listed is יום שמחתכם, the day of happiness. Which day is that? Chazal in the Sifri explain that it refers to Shabbos. Thus, Shabbos is called a day of happiness. The Bais Yosef (Siman 281) in the name of the Shibolei Haleket explains that that is the source of why some say “שמחו במלכותך” in the Shabbos prayers.

However, several sources say there is no concept of “Simcha” on Shabbos. The Gemara in Moed Katan says that unlike a Yom Tov, Shabbos does not interrupt Aveilus and a mourner must continue Shiva after Shabbos ends. Tosfos (23b) explain that the reason why Shabbos does not stop Aveilus is because there is no Din of Simcha on Shabbos, and only a day of Simcha stops Aveilus.

The Rambam in Hilchos Yom Tov (Perek 6) compares Yom Tov to Shabbos regarding Oneg and Kavod – pleasure and respect. Later he writes that on Yom Tov one has to be in a state of Simcha. Rabbi Akiva Eiger, in his first Teshuva, notes that the Rambam only compares Yom Tov and Shabbos by Oneg and Kavod, and learns that there is no concept of Simcha on Shabbos.

Similarly, the Maharil holds that although one can have a Taanis Chalom – a fast due to a bad dream – on Shabbos, a Taanis Chalom is not allowed on Yom Tov because Yom Tov requires Simcha and Shabbos does not. In addition, the Halacha is that one cannot have a wedding meal on Yom Tov because we don't mix multiple Simcha occasions together (“אין מערבין שמחה בשמחה”), but it was customary to have the Chuppah on Friday and the meal on Leil Shabbos. This also implies that there is no Simcha on Shabbos.

The Maharsham in Daas Torah (beginning of Siman 242) brings a long list of other sources who also say that Shabbos is not a day of Simcha. How can we reconcile these with the Sifri in this week's Parsha saying that Shabbos is called a day of Simcha?

We will try to answer this in two ways:

The common answer is based on what “Simcha” means on Yom Tov, and the simple understating is that it stems from the obligation to bring a Korban called: Shalmei Simcha. The Gemara in Pesachim says that there are no Shalmei Simcha on the first night of Yom Tov, or Erev Yom Tov. The Shaagas Aryeh questions that if there is no Shalmei Simcha why the first night of Yom Tov interrupts Shiva? The Emek Bracha answers in the name of Rav Chaim Soloveichik that although there is no obligation to enjoy a Korban of Simcha, there is still an obligation to be happy, and to increase the Simcha in other ways such as: meat and wine for men, jewelry for women, and candy for kids (as the Rambam Ibid. describes), so there is Simcha the night of Yom Tov.

Rav Shmuel Rozovsky expands upon this and says that the difference between the day of Yom Tov and the first night, is that during the day there is an obligation to be actively involved in Simcha, while the night is a “passive” Simcha. The Maharsham (Ibid.) brings in the name of Toras Chaim that this is the difference between Yom Tov and Shabbos. Yom Tov there is more of an active obligation to be involved in Simcha, while on Shabbos it is a passive Simcha. (Although the night of Yom Tov is passive in comparison to the day of Yom Tov, it is still less passive than the day of Shabbos).

I found a similar idea in the Sdei Chemed in the name of Sefer Meleches Shlomo, who discusses a case which is very relevant now. There was a Gzeira on the Jews not to use their shuls for several months, and they were finally allowed to return to shul on Shavuot. The question was: would having a celebratory shul rededication on Shavuot violate the rule against mixing happy occasions? The Meleches Shlomo says that a shul re-dedication does not qualify as an "active" Simcha and it was permitted on Yom Tov.

This idea works both ways. On Shabbos, when Simcha is passive, there is no issue of mixing happy occasions and so it is no problem to have a Simcha on Shabbos. This pertains to a Siyum as well: Some say that doing so on Yom Tov may violate mixing two smachot together, but based on the above, Shabbos presents no issues.

I heard another solution from my Rebbi, Rav Moshe Shapiro zt"l. As mentioned, the Bais Yosef notes the custom to say ישמחו במלכותך in the Shabbos prayers. It is indeed the Minhag of Nusach Sefarad that every one of the Shabbos Tefilos mentions Simcha, while Nusach Ashkenaz does not. The Sefer Haminhagim explains the Ashkenaz Minhag is based on Tosfos in Moed Katan saying that there is no Simcha on Shabbos. However, Nusach Ashkenaz does mention ישמחו במלכותך in Musaf! Why is it mentioned there if there is no Simcha on Shabbos? My Rebbe answered that although there is no Simcha on Shabbos in general, there was certainly a Simcha when Am Yisroel brought the Korban Musaf. There was in fact a special song and trumpeting when the Korban was brought. Therefore, although Nusach Ashkenaz doesn't mention Simcha during Shabbos, because there is no concept of Simcha on Shabbos, they do mention it in Musaf, because when bringing the Kurban Mussaf there was a Simcha.

This may also explain the following: Tosfos in Megillah (23a) asks: Why don't we read the Maftir of Korban Musaf every Shabbos (as is done every Yom Tov)? Tosfos suggests a few answers, among them: 1) Because the Haftarah for every Shabbos would have to be the same since a Haftarah is always linked to the Maftir. 2) Because it is only two verses and the minimum size of a Torah reading is three verses. According to the above it seems that the Shabbos Musaf and the Yom Tov Musaf are different, as the Shabbos Musaf is not reflective of the spirit of the day, - Shabbos is not a day of Simcha while Mussaf is a time of Simcha. The Yom Tov Musaf, on the other hand, reflects the Simcha of the whole day. That is why on Yom Tov we read The Maftir that reflects the day, while on Shabbos we do not.

With that, I think we have an answer to the above question: There is no Simcha on Shabbos except for during Korban Musaf and that is why Tosfos says that Shabbos does not interrupt Shiva. When Chazal say that the words ביום שמחתכם in our Pasuk is talking about Shabbos, they were referring specifically to the Korban Musaf ceremony, and there Shabbos is in fact mentioned as a day of Simcha.

It seems that the questions of whether Shabbos is considered a day of Simcha may depend on the differing opinions of Nusach Sefarad and Nusach Ashkenaz. Maybe this can explain different approaches to Shabbos in general...