

Simchat Torah

The Mitochondria for Joy

Deuteronomy 16:14-15

וְשִׂמְחִתֶּךָ בְּחַגְגְּךָ... וְהָיִיתָ אֶרֶב שְׂמֵחַ

And you shall rejoice in your Festival... and you will only be happy.

Maimonides: Positive Commandment #54

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

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 HaShoevah*, i.e. the rejoicing with musical instruments and dancing in the Temple [on *Sukkos*]. All the above are included in the commandment, "You shall rejoice on your festival."

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."