

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

למען ישמעו • שחיני עצרת תשפ"ד • 743
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SIMCHAS TORAH

PRECIOUS HOURS

The Frierdiker Rebbe related, in the name of his father, the Rebbe Rashab: "The 48 hours of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah must be held very precious, for at every moment one can draw pails full and barrels full of treasures, both *b'gashmius* and *b'ruchnius*. This is accomplished through dancing."

(ספר המאמרים תשי"א ע' 79)

A certain chossid, distraught, once made a long trek to visit one of our Rebbeim. (When the Frierdiker Rebbe narrated this incident, he added: "And I'm not going to tell you who was the chossid and who was the Rebbe.") That chossid had come to report that his mentor had come to him in a dream with fearful news: It had been decreed in Heaven that one of his children would pass away. The Rebbe heard his words, sighed, and did not answer.

Since it was before Succos, the chossid remained near his Rebbe until after *Yom-Tov*, and before returning home, he asked him for a *beracha*. The Rebbe said, "It will be good; the child will live."

The chossid asked the Rebbe for a promise that this would be so. The Rebbe promised, and then asked him, "What did you do on Simchas Torah?"

The chossid replied, "When everyone was dancing at *hakafos* I stood by the oven and cried. But then I reminded myself that it was Simchas Torah, so I washed my face and went to dance with the Torah."

The Rebbe replied, "You should know that by doing so, you reversed your situation."

(ספר המאמרים תרפ"ז ע' 241)

Once, while dancing during *hakafos*, the Frierdiker Rebbe (before he was Rebbe) told a certain chossid: "Granted that we are not up to the *avoda* of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. But the *avoda* of Simchas Torah – dancing – that we *can* do. So dance! Raise yourself up!"

(מפי השמועה, וכע"ז בסה"ש תשי"ג ע' 8)

PASSIONATE DANCING

During *hakafos*, the Mittlerer Rebbe was in such a state of *dveikus* that he was unable to hold the *sefer* Torah alone. He would take a few steps and then someone would have to go behind him and hold onto it.

(סה"ש תרצ"ז ע' 163)

CONSIDER

What is the joy of Simchas Torah about? How does it apply to everyone?

One Simchas Torah, the *Tzemach Tzedek* danced energetically at *hakafos* without tiring. Robust young men could not keep up with him. A few even collapsed from exhaustion. While dancing, he encouraged them, "Dance, *Yidden!* Dance! Rejoice on Simchas Torah and be blessed with children, life, and an abundant livelihood!"

The wife of the *Tzemach Tzedek* complained to her father, the Mittlerer Rebbe, that her husband was wearing out the chassidim with his dancing. The Rebbe replied, "A revelation of the light of Simchas Torah is now shining for him as it shone in the *Beis HaMikdosh*. Through his rejoicing he is meriting a revelation of the essence of the *neschama*, as it is in the world of *Atzilus*, and even higher."

(ספר השיחות תשי"ג ע' 11)

REJOICING WITH THE TORAH

Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev once observed a simple person dancing with gusto on Simchas Torah. Recognizing that he was utterly unlearned, the *tzaddik* asked him what he was rejoicing about. The *Yid* answered, "When my

brother marries off his daughter, should I not participate in his rejoicing...?"

The Rebbe explains that in fact Simchas Torah is not "a brother's *chassunah*," the celebration of some other *Yid*, but rather every individual's personal rejoicing. The joy on Simchas Torah is about the essence of the Torah, which is accessible to every *Yid*, for when he studies even the smallest segment of Torah, through it he is connected to the entire Torah.

(תו"מ חל"ב ע' 92, שיחור"ק תשל"ח ח"א ע' 86)

The Frierdiker Rebbe once expressed himself: "It is not enough that on Simchas Torah we rejoice with the Torah; the Torah must also be happy with us."

(ספר השיחות תש"ב ע' 3)

One year after *davening* on Simchas Torah morning, the *Tzemach Tzedek* sat down to *farbreng*. During that time he drank a large quantity of *mashke*, taught a lot of *Chassidus*, and spoke a great deal about his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe. Whenever he mentioned his *zeide's* holy name his face was aflame, and his eyes filled with tears that streamed down his cheeks like two springs of water. The *farbrengens* extended throughout the day and continued until the early hours of the morning.

After everyone left and the *Tzemach Tzedek* returned to his room, some chassidim peeked through the cracks to see what he was doing. They saw him sitting with a *Gemara*, learning with delight and enthusiasm.

(סיפורי חסידים מועדים זוין ע' 239)

Early in the morning, after a night of *hakafos* on Simchas Torah, the Rebbe would return to his study. One year, a young boy was curious to know what the Rebbe was doing at such an hour, so he climbed up, peeked through the window, and saw the Rebbe sitting and learning from a big *Gemara* or *Shulchan Aruch*.

(מפי בעל המעשה)

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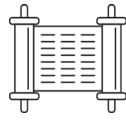
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KIDDUSH ON MASHKE

Can I make kiddush on mashke on Simchas Torah?

Halacha mentions the option of using chamar medina ("the drink of the land") in certain circumstances as a substitute for wine when making havdala or bentching with a kos. Poskim vary on the precise definition of chamar medina and whether it may be used when wine is available in town (see issue 158).

Regarding kiddush, the Rambam holds that chamar medina cannot be used, and bread is the only alternative to wine. On the other extreme, the Rosh holds that even someone who has wine can use chamar medina for kiddush, though wine is still preferred to beautify the mitzva. The Alter Rebbe rules that for the night kiddush, in the absence of wine, challah is preferred over chamar medina (for the Rambam's view), while by day, when kiddush doesn't have a distinct bracha, chamar medina is preferred to show that it is kiddush. Of course, if wine is available, one must always use wine.

[There is additional room to be lenient by day. Since after kiddush on chamar medina he will make hamotzi on bread - covering both opinions - the Alter Rebbe allows it for the daytime kiddush when wine is costly, even if one has wine. Although there is a third view that both are invalid for kiddush, one need not be so strict for the daytime kiddush which is less stringent. Still, the Alter Rebbe concludes, kiddush should optimally always be made over wine.]

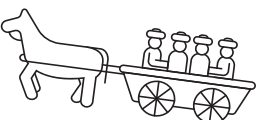
Throughout the ages, it was accepted in Chabad to allow Shabbos day kiddush on mashke, especially on Simchas Torah when mashke is more special (as the Alter Rebbe records the practice to make havdala on beer on Motzai Pesach given its sensation after not having it all Pesach). While some communities suffice with a shot glass (based on the Taz's view on the shiur for strong drinks), the Alter Rebbe does not record such a distinction.

When the Rebbe implemented the famous restriction on mashke - on Shabbos Shemini 5723 - he made clear that kiddush must be made on wine and not mashke. The Rebbe added that when one realizes how revolting mashke is, it will become halachically unsuitable for kiddush. Only for Simchas Torah did the Rebbe make an exception, saying, "Even one 75 years old should make kiddush on wine and not mashke, except for Simchas Torah."

For those under 40, the Rebbe spoke strongly that they not recite kiddush on mashke at all, going so far to ban them from participating in tahalucha or Merkos Shlichus. When the chazzan made kiddush on Simchas Torah over mashke, the Rebbe noted that he was over 40 years old and those younger shouldn't learn from him.

אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו. שיחות קודש תשכ"ג ע' 403 - ביחידות הרע"ז סלונים שהצעירים לא יקדשו או יבדילו על יי"ש. במודעה מאת הרב שניאור גרליק ז"ל (צילומה בביבת חיינו גל' 130 ע' 24): "פקודה במכתב מל"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א... שלא לעשות קידוש על יי"ש רק על יין-גפן או פת, ושידיעו לו מי שעובר על זה". וביחידות לחברי המזכירות והנהלת צא"ח ב' סיון תשכ"ח (תו"מ חנ"ב ע' 414): "שאלו שאינם שומרים על התקנות בנוגע למשקה אינם השלוחים שלי. והניי מבקשם שלא להשתתף בתהלוכה, וכן בנוגע לנטיעה בקיץ בשליחות המל"ח". ראה המלך במסיבו ח"א ע' רסו. תו"מ חנ"ב ע' 165.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



REBBETZIN DEVORAH LEAH

Rebbetzin Devorah Leah was one of the Alter Rebbe's three daughters, and was as extremely dedicated to her father as one of the great chassidim. Her husband was Reb Sholom Shachna (son of Reb Noach Altschuler, a chossid of Reb Mendel Horodoker), and they had one son: the Tzemach Tzedek. She had great mesirus nefesh to annul the decree against Chassidus by giving up her life in the place of her father. She passed away at age 26 on 3 Tishrei 5553 (1792) and is buried in Liozhna.

The Tzemach Tzedek related:

In 5603 (1843) when I was called to the conference of rabbonim in Petersburg, I went to the resting place of my mother in Liozhna. There she told me that as a result of her mesirus nefesh for chassidim and Chassidus she was granted the merit to be in the chamber of the Baal Shem Tov to arouse mercy for me. There she requested from him that he should give her a segula with which I will b'ezras Hashem be able to stand strong against the opponents of Chassidus. The Baal Shem Tov told her,

"Your son is fluent in all of the letters of the five books of Torah, Tehilim and Tanya by heart. It is written "Vayehi chitas Elokim." ChiTaS is an acronym of Chumash, Tehilim and Tanya, and one that is versed in all of its letters breaks all concealments.

(קיצורים והערות בספר התניא ע' קכו)

Before she passed away she requested from her father that he himself should educate and guide her only son. The Alter Rebbe fulfilled his promise and every day, including Shabbos, yom tov, and even Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, he would learn with his grandson, saying that by doing so he pays up his obligation to his daughter. Reb Moshe, the Alter Rebbe's youngest son, writes in one of his diaries of the year 5555 (1795) that the Alter Rebbe spoke about the elevation the neshama of Devorah Leah receives through their learning. He continued to explain at length the great spiritual goodness that children cause for their parents through learning Torah and conducting themselves with good midos.

A Moment with The Rebbe



TAKE YOUR DONATION BACK!

At the Simchas Torah farbrengen of 5740 (1979), the Rebbe suddenly grew serious and began, "A Yid once received a bracha from my father-in-law, that whatever he gives to tzedaka he will see returned to him multiplied by five. Indeed, this is what happened. Likewise, today, whoever gives tzedaka beyond his means will see it returned to him multiplied by five. He will be able to count it with his fingers, as a Litvak would!"

After these words, a niggun was started. The Rebbe sat for a while with closed eyes and a very solemn expression.

The Rebbe opened his eyes and said, "People will come after Simchas Torah

and ask if I was serious. There is nothing to ask... But don't come [to pledge] after Simchas Torah, when we're overcome with measured limitations."

Many of the assembled took upon themselves great sums for tzedaka. However, some only realized what was happening after yom tov and approached the mazkirus to give a donation.

At the next farbrengen the Rebbe said, "Whoever decided then, his donation will be accepted. But if not, he should take it back. If he won't, I will have to send it back..."

(Sichos Kodesh 5740; Parshios Im Harebi, Bereishis, Page 235)