

The Weekly Farbrengens



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 תש"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 HaMikdash*. Through his rejoicing he is meriting a revelation of the essence of the *neshama*, as it is in the world of *Atzilus*, and even higher."

(ספר השיחות תש"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"א 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.

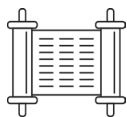
After everyone left and the *Tzemach Tzedek* returned to his room, some chassidim peeked through the cracks to see what he was doing. They saw him sitting with a *Gemara*, learning with delight and enthusiasm.

(סיפורי חסידים מועדים זיו"ן 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)





CANDLES ON YOM TOV

May I light decorative candles on yom tov?

Kindling fire on yom tov from an existing flame is only permitted for food preparation or when it serves some yom tov purpose that is universally appreciated (*shaveh l'chol nefesh*).¹

Even if one has already lit yom tov candles with a bracha, one may light additional candles which enhance the meal for the honor of yom tov, even today when we have electric lights.² But candles that do not honor yom tov in any way are prohibited.³ Therefore, one should avoid transferring a flame with a match if it's not much harder to light the candle directly from the existing flame.⁴

The Alter Rebbe objects to those who kindle a kind of fireworks on Simchas Torah. Although their intent is for the rejoicing of the day, this manner of rejoicing is not universally appreciated, so the kindling is prohibited.⁵

Candles for the sake of a mitzva are permitted. For example, one may light candles in a shul, even at a time when it is already light or no one is present, since the candles honor Hashem, as the *poskim* says, "Honor Hashem with lights."⁶

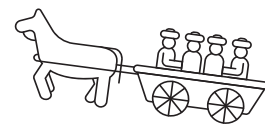
For a *bris* or *sheva brachos* at one's home, *poskim* allow lighting candles for the honor of the *mitzva*.⁷ Some *poskim* rule that one shouldn't light candles at other day meals, as there is no special need for candles, and they don't provide benefit during the day.⁸ While others allow, provided the candles serve somewhat of a yom tov purpose or *mitzva* enhancement (though it's not common custom to have lit candles by an ordinary yom tov day *seuda*).⁹

A *yahrtzeit* candle (or *teshuva licht* when Rosh Hashanah begins on Thursday), from which there is no direct benefit, is best to light before yom tov. If one forgot, they may light it in shul (e.g., at the *amud*), where candles are a *mitzva* and honor Hashem.¹⁰ Some allow lighting at home (preferably with the other yom tov candles at the table), since lighting a *yahrtzeit* candle is a form of honoring one's parents, which is a *mitzva*.¹¹

6. שו"ע ר' שם סי"ד.
7. מ"ב שם סק"ל.
8. שו"ת באר משה ח"ג סי' ע"ו.
9. ראה נטעי גבריאל יו"ט פ"כ ה"ח.
10. ראה פסק"ת שם סק"ד.
11. ראה ביה"ל שם ד"ה נר. ולהעיר משו"ע ר' רס"א ס"ב ("שמאחר שהעולם נהררים בזה הרי זה כצורך גדול").

1. שו"ע ר' סי' תצ"ה ס"ג.
2. ראה חוט שני יו"ט פ"א סק"א.
3. שו"ע ר' סי' תקי"ד סי"ג.
4. שו"ת באר משה ח"ח סי' קע"ט. וראה שו"מ מנח"י ח"ה סי' ט"ז סק"ב. ובנטעי גבריאל יו"ט פ"כ ה"ב שמה"ד מותר.
5. ראה שו"ע ר' שם סכ"א. וראה שו"ת משנת יוסף ח"ג סי' ק"כ לגבי זיקוקין די-נור (fireworks).

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



REB SHMUEL BER BARISOVER

Reb Shmuel Dovber Lipkin of Borisov, known to Chabad chasidim as "Reb Shmuel Ber Barisover," was a great *maskil*, *oived* and *chossid* of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab used to call him "Rashdam." The Friediker Rebbe spent much time with him, listening to the stories he related about the previous generations of chassidim.

Reb Shmuel Ber once spent a long time in *yechidus* with the Rebbe Maharash, after which he asked the Rebbe, "After everything has been said, I still want to know what a *chossid* is."

"Go to my son, the Rashab," the Rebbe responded. Reb Shmuel was somewhat perplexed, for he was already an elderly *chossid* while the Rashab was still a young man.

The Rebbe explained, "I get up early every morning. One morning, at an early hour, I sent my *shamash* to see what my son the Rashab was busy with, and he reported that my son was sitting with a Siddur, though he could not tell exactly

what he was doing. I sent someone else, who returned to tell me that the Rashab was sitting with a Siddur, an Abudraham, and a Nac"n, learning the translation of the *davening*."

"This," the Rebbe concluded, "is what a *chossid* is. He is capable of harnessing himself. After all the levels he may have attained, he can still sit with a Siddur and learn the simple meaning of the words in *davening*."

Reb Shmuel Groinim, the revered *mashpia* in Lubavitch, once visited Reb Shmuel Ber Barisover and, standing behind the door, he overheard him telling a local butcher: "The *Mishna* says that whoever acts as if he is lame or blind will not die of old age until he becomes lame or blind. This can be understood positively, as follows: A person who pretends to be lame, meaning that he does not go to inappropriate places, or a person who pretends to be blind, not looking where a *ruchniusdiker* danger is involved, will not die until *HaShem* helps him become 'lame' or 'blind,' so that he will not even desire such things."

(למען ידעו ע' 311)

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



ONE HUNDRED ONLY CHILDREN

Rabbi Sholom Ber Chaikin of Cleveland relates:

When the Yom Kippur War broke out, the Rebbe immediately began demanding an increase in *simcha*. Throughout the Yom Tov Sukkos, the Rebbe encouraged holding Simchas Beis Hashoeiva *farbrengens*, being joyous in a festive spirit.

During this period, the Agudas Horabonim of the USA and Canada announced a *taimis*, but the Rebbe held that an emphasis should be placed on *simcha*.

In a private conversation, the Rebbe shared his disapproval with Reb Simcha

Elberg, a leader in the Agudas Horabonim, and added that the proclamation was not consistent with *halacha* to abstain from fasting on *chol hamoed*.

"Indeed," Reb *simcha* replied. "But you must understand the circumstances. In fact, some of the rabbonim in the committee have their own children in the army on the battlefield."

"I also have one hundred 'only children' on the front," the Rebbe responded, referring the reserves from the Lubavitcher Chassidim that were called to serve.

(As heard from Rabbi Sholom Ber Chaikin)