

The Weekly Farbrengens



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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

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 HaMikdash*. 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 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"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)

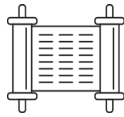
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SUKKAH WALL SHORTCUTS

Can I make a sukkah with more than one sukkah wall shortcuts?

Some of the most interesting halachos about the building of a sukkah are the various “shortcuts” transmitted through *halacha l'moshe misinai* regarding what constitutes a halachic wall.

For example, *gud asik* (“extend the wall upward”) teaches us that the walls needn't reach all the way to the *s'chach*. As long as the wall is ten *tefachim*, it is considered to extend invisibly upward until the *s'chach* at a distance above.¹ (Conversely, the walls do need to reach within 3 *tefachim* to the floor to prevent animals like goats from walking under.)²

Lavud (“joining”) means that gaps in a wall that are less than 3 *tefachim* — e.g. between sticks or ropes — are considered filled up and it is a continuous wall.

Dofen akuma (“bent wall”) considers up to 4 *amos* of invalid *s'chach* next to the walls as an extension of the wall, and the kosher *s'chach* next to it is considered next to the wall.

Can two of these “shortcuts” be combined to make a sukkah kosher?

One example is when we want to use both *lavud* and *gud asik*. Let's say there are short walls of 10 *tefachim* made up of tight strings or belts every 3 *tefachim* and then a gap until the *s'chach* directly above. Alternatively, the short wall is solid, but the *s'chach* begins 2.5 *tefachim* in from where the invisible wall hits above. In practice, these two “shortcuts” can combine to make the sukkah kosher.³

Lavud and *dofen akuma* can also be combined. For example, if even after the “bent wall” of invalid *s'chach* ends, there is an airspace of less than 3 *tefachim* until the kosher *s'chach* begins.⁴

How about *gud asik* and *dofen akuma*?

In such a case, we want to create a “bent wall” as a continuation from an invisible wall, which is more difficult to say than the previous examples. Therefore, *poskim* debate whether these two “shortcuts” can be combined to make a sukkah kosher. The Tur rules they can, while the Ran is stringent.⁵

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' תר"ל ס"ט. 2. טור סי' תר"ל, וט"ז סי' תרל"ב. 3. ס"ק א', ומנגד ר"ן, שו"ת פנים 4. שו"ע או"ח סי' תר"ל ס"ט, מאירות ח"א סי' ס"א, וראה ולהעיר מהריטב"א שפוסל גם משנ"ב סי' תרל"ב ס"ק ד' בזה. 5. והביאור מבוסס על ס' הסוכה ח"א פ"ה ה' ע"ה.

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



R. SHMUEL VIETKER

R. Shmuel Freidin (5638-c. 5685) was born in Vietka to his father R. Levi Yitzchak, the brother of the famous *gaon* R. Shneur Zalman Fradkin, author of the *Toras Chesed*. He was one of the early *talmidim* in Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, and was known for his sincere davening and *yiras Shomayim*. In 5665, he was appointed the Rov of Plissa in the Vilna region, where his learning and *yiras Shomayim* made a strong impression on non-Chassidische rabbonim, including R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinski of Vilna.

R. Shmerel Sasonkin records:

During a break one day at cheder, we boys went into the shul and found a yeshiva student davening alone. He was a 'Tomim,' a *talmid* of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva in Lubavitch, and in the manner of the 'Temimim,' he wore a long coat, and his face was crowned with *peyos*.

The people in my town, Propoysk, were unused to such dress, for they all had short *peyos* and short coats, and he looked to them like some strange creature. When he walked in the street, youngsters gathered around him, running after him, and laughing at him.

As he davened in the shul with devotion and melody, the cheder children imitated him and disturbed him from davening. When his patience was spent, he chased after them to leave the shul. They all ran away, and he couldn't catch them. I was a quiet boy who did not imitate him, so I was unafraid to remain in the shul, but he poured out his wrath on me...

Years later, when I was myself a *talmid* in Lubavitch, this young man, Shmuel Vietker as he was known, came to visit the Rebbe. I reminded him of his visit to my town and what had occurred then. He told me,

that when he returned on the steamboat an entire group of youths gathered about him to mock him. They would not let him be and demanded that he sell them his *peyos*. Seeing that he could not get rid of them, he agreed to their demand without payment, so long as they fulfill a specified condition (which he did not disclose to me). Hearing his demand, they backed down and he was left in peace.

(זכרונותי ע' 8)

Even as a bochur in Lubavitch, R. Shmuel was known for his courage. When a part of the Rebbe Rashab's *maamar* was unclear, most of the bochorim were afraid to approach the Rebbe for clarification, but R. Shmuel would go and ask.

One Sunday morning before Rosh Hashana of 5665, Shmuel Vietker turned to his fellow *tomim* Shmuel Levitin — they were known in Lubavitch as "Shmuel Alef" and "Shmuel Beis" — and invited him to come along to ask the Rebbe to explain them *pshat* in the *maamar*. They found the main door to the Rebbe's home locked, though the door to the Rebbe's dining room was closed but unlocked. Shmuel Vietker bravely opened the door, and they entered. Inside, they found the Rebbe Rashab opening the letters that had arrived ahead of Rosh Hashana.

The Rebbe Rashab looked at them surprised and asked what they wanted. At first the Rebbe Rashab told them that this wasn't the right time, but then he conceded. He handed Shmuel Levitin a pen and paper and proceeded to explain the *maamar* at length.

(ועוד ניצוצי אור ע' 257)

R. Shmuel Vietker once said, "I don't understand how it's possible to have a *chayus* in Chassidus without crying during davening."

(ניצוצי אור)

A Moment with The Rebbe



CHASSIDUS GROWTH

Two hours after *hakafos* on Simchas Torah night 5717 (1956) had concluded, the Rebbe entered the *sukka* and got up onto a chair. The Rebbe announced that he would give a *l'chaim* to all those who would undertake an increase in their study of Chassidus.

As the Rebbe handed out these *l'chaims* to the *bochorim* and *yungeleit* present to the sound of lively singing, some merited a few personal words:

The Rebbe said to M.L., “The idea of increasing in Chassidus does not apply only to the actual study or time spent on it. It also means that one should add to

the results of this study, in thought, speech and action.”

When another *bochur* came by, the Rebbe told him that becoming conceited as a result of one's knowledge of Chassidus is “like placing an *avoda zara* in the *Beis HaMikdash!*”

When A.H. received his *mashke*, the Rebbe challenged him: “Why it is that you become so frustrated when you miss a single breakfast — yet, if one, two, or even three days went by without studying any Chassidus it doesn't not seem to bother you at all!”

(From the diary of a bochur then in 770)