

שמחת תורה

THE AVODAH OF שמחת תורה

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לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי ש"י בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

THE KEDUSHA OF THE DAY

The Friediker 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 every second, one can draw pails and barrels b'gashmius and b'ruchnius. This is achieved through dancing."

(ספר המאמרים תשי"א ע' 79)

The Friediker Rebbe said: The intense rejoicing of Simchas Torah is a keili for the provisions of one's physical needs for the whole year.

(סה"ש תרפ"ז ע' 236)

Once while dancing during hakafos, the Friediker Rebbe (before he was a Rebbe) told a chossid: "Granted, that we are not up to the service of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. However, the service of Simchat Torah, to dance, that we can do. So dance! Raise yourself up!"

(מפי השמועה, וכע"ז בסה"ש תש"ג ע' 8)

The Ba'al Shem Tov related to his talmidim: On Simchas Torah Yidden daven shachris a little later, because of the hakafos and seuda the night before. The malochim who do not have this avoda, are preparing as usual to recite songs of praise. However, they must wait for the Yidden, as they cannot sing praise to Hashem until the Yidden sing them below. In the meantime they occupy themselves 'cleaning up Gan Eden.' Suddenly, they find shoes there, which amazes them, for they are used to finding tzitzis and tefillin, but not shoes. They go to Malach Michoel to ask him about it, and he tells them that this is his merchandise which comes from the dancing of the Yidden with Sifrei Torah, and he begins to count the shoes, "These are from Kaminka, these are from Mezritch." With this Malach Michael glories over Malach Metat, who fashions crowns for his Creator from the tefillos of the Yidden, saying that he will make better crowns from these torn shoes.

(הוספות לכתר שם טוב קי"ד)

A certain Chasid once came to one of the Rebbes and related that his teacher 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.

Being that it was before Succos, the chossid remained by his Rebbe until after Yom Tov, and before returning home, the Chasid went in to the Rebbe to ask for a brachah. The Rebbe said,

"It will be good; the child will live." The chossid asked the Rebbe for a promise, and 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; however, then I remembered that it was Simchas Torah, so I washed my face and went to dance with the Torah." The Rebbe said to him, "You should know that with this you accomplished the change in your situation."

(ספר המאמרים תרפ"ז ע' 241)

DANCING WITH SIMCHA

During hakafos, the Mittlerer Rebbe would be in a tremendous dveikus to the point 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 the Sefer Torah.

(ספר השיחות תרצ"ז ע' 163)

One Simchas Torah the Tzemach Tzedek danced at hakafos energetically without tiring. Robust young men were not able to keep up with him, and a few of them collapsed from exhaustion. While dancing, he encouraged them, "Dance, Yidden! Dance! Rejoice on Simchas Torah and merit children, life, and sustenance in abundance!" The Tzemach Tzedek's wife went to her father the Mittlerer Rebbe, and complained that her husband was wearing out the Chasidim with his dancing. The Rebbe replied, "A revelation of the light of Simchas Torah shines now for him as it shone in the Beis Hamikdash. Through his rejoicing he merits a revelation of the neshama's essence, as it is in the world of Atzilus and even higher."

(ספר השיחות תש"ג ע' 11)

On Simchas Torah in the year תרמ"ח, when the Rebbe Rashab was honored with the first hakafa, he said that he was not yet ready. He called over a certain wholesaler and asked him to explain the nature of his business. The chossid explained that he brings merchandise from the big city and distributes it to the small retailers, and those who pay for the goods they had been given the previous time, receive a new batch on credit. Upon hearing this, the Rebbe said, "After we paid up our bill with the avodah of Chodesh Elul,

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkos, Simchas Beis Ha'Shoeiva and Shemini Atzeres, we can now go to hakafos and get new merchandise on credit ('hakafa' also means credit)."

(ספר השיחות תש"ה ע' 57)

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לע"נ שרה רבקה בת ר' יוסף ע"ה



The Frierdiker Rebbe related: "One year on Shemini Atzeres a few Chasidim danced with much fervor and chayus. Afterwards the Rebbe Rashab commented, 'Though they had danced with hislahavus and feeling, it was not wild, for the Alter Rebbe drew down the light of intellect also into dancing.'" The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded that this possible only because the chossidim had teachers and leaders who directed them in their avoda, for only then were they sure to go on the right path.

(ספר השיחות תרצ"ו ע' 263)

The tzaddik Reb Chaim of Kosov had a minhag to dance every Friday night with great hislahavus, his face burning aflame. Once a bentch fell on his feet and because of the pain he stopped dancing for a few weeks. Sometime later, he was dancing again with the same fire, as if nothing had ever happened. His Chassidim wanted to stop him, knowing that his legs were still in pain, but Reb Chaim said, "You think I stopped dancing because my feet were hurting? On the contrary! My feet were hurting because I had stopped dancing!"

(סיפורי חסידים מועדים ע' 162)

REJOICING WITH THE TORAH

Once the tzaddik Reb Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev saw a simple person dancing on Simchas Torah. Recognizing that he was unable to learn at all, he asked him what he is rejoicing about. The Yid answered, "When my brother marries off his daughter, should I not participate in his rejoicing?"

The Rebbe explains that truthfully Simchas Torah is not "a brother's chassunah," the celebration of another Yid, but rather every Yid's personal rejoicing. The joy on Simchas Torah is about the essence of the Torah, which is accessible to every Yid, for when a Yid learns even the smallest portion of torah, he is connected to the entire torah through that portion.

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

One year after davening on Simchas Torah morning, the Tzemach Tzedek farbrenge. During the farbrenge, he drank a large quantity of mashke, said a lot of chassidus and spoke a great deal about his grandfather the Alter Rebbe. When he mentioned his zeide's holy name, his face became aflame and his eyes filled with tears streaming down his cheeks, like two springs of water. The farbrenge extended throughout the day 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)

After a night of Simchas Torah hakafos, early in morning, the Rebbe would return to his room. One year, a young boy was curious to know what the Rebbe was doing at such an hour, so he climbed up, peeked thru the window, and saw the Rebbe sitting and learning from a big sefer (either

a Gemara or Shulchan Aruch).

(מפי בעל המעשה)

The Frierdiker Rebbe once expressed himself: "It is not enough that we rejoice with the Torah on Simchas Torah, but the Torah must rejoice with us."

(ספר השיחות תש"ב ע' 3)

Originally the minhag had been that the beginning of Parshas Bereishis (in the learning of Chitas) would be learned on Isru Chag, however the Rebbe suggested that it be learned on Simchas Torah itself, since we begin leining Bereishis on that day. The Rebbe explained that in previous years, every moment of Simchas Torah had been utilized for rejoicing, so the learning had been pushed off to the following day. However, one who takes time off for other things, should better use that time to learn...

(התוועדות תשמ"ו ח"א ע' 452 ואילך)

GROWING FURTHER

The Rebbe Rashab said: "When a poor storekeeper accepts merchandise on credit, he is glad to be trusted, but the main thing is to profit. On Simchas Torah it is the same; we rejoice about the credit, the kochos we are given, but the true rejoicing is when we succeed in paying back the debt for the 'merchandise', using what we have received for Torah and mitzvos."

(אג"ק אדמו"ר הרי"צ ח"ט ע' 370)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related: My father, the Rebbe Rashab, had the minhag of announcing after the seudah on Simchas Torah, "Now is the time of 'ויעקב הלך לדרכו' ('and Yaakov goes on his way.'). After the avoda of Tishrei, the Yidden go in the way of torah and mitzvos throughout the entire year.

The Frierdiker Rebbe explained that at the market we acquire merchandise, and when we go home throughout the whole year we unpack the merchandise and use it as needed. Similarly, during the month of Tishrei every Yid is given "merchandise" to provide for his needs during the whole year; however it is necessary to open the packages, to do with the merchandise what is needed. Though, one must not forget to unpack soon, for otherwise the merchandise may rot or dry out, and sometimes the mice will hurry (אריינכאפן) to eat the merchandise...

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"א ע' קצ"ד, סה"ש תש"ז ע' 74, אג"ק ח"ד ע' י"ח)

The Rebbe explained: After the month of Tishrei, the avoda is to draw Yiddishkeit and kedusha into the mundane activities of the year. All actions, even eating, drinking and business should be done in a Yiddishe way: eating with a bracha, thanking Hashem for the food and doing business honestly, without intruding on another's livelihood.

(לקו"ש ח"ט ע' 7)