

Parsha Encounters

www.cckollel.org

19 Shevat 5766/Feb. 17, 2006

Parshas Yisro - Rabbi Shlomo Pomerantz

Refresher Course

Once asked a Yid who always seemed so happy and fresh in his davening, "What's the trick?" He responded that it's through the *koach* of *chiddush* - the power of renewal. Let's discuss the *koach* of *chiddush*.

In this week's parsha it says "*bachodesh hash'lishi latzeis...*" The word "*chodesh*" can refer to a month or it can mean renewal. The S'fas Emes says we find three instances of renewal in the history of our world. The first time was the creation of the world. The second time was before leaving Mitzrayim when Bnei Yisrael were given the Mitzvah of "*hachodesh hazeh lachem...*" The third instance was when Bnei Yisrael received the Torah.

These three times of "*chiddush*" given to Bnei Yisrael came as a direct result of the *zechus* (merit) of our *avos hak'doshim* (forefathers). Through Avrohom Avinu, who was the pillar of *chesed* (kindness), we merited the creation of the world. This is so because the world was created as an act of *chesed* as Chazal state, "*olam chesed yibaneh*". Through Yitzchak Avinu who characterized the middah of *g'vurah*, strength, we merited yetzias mitzrayim. Lastly, through the merit Yaakov Avinu, who personified *Emes* (truth), we received the Torah which is called Toras Emes.

It is known that our *avos* represent the three pillars of service to Hashem. Avraham corre-

sponds to *gemilus chasadim*, Yitzchak to *avoda*, and Yaakov to Torah. Based on the above, we see that all aspects of our *avodas Hashem* must be done with vigor in order for us to reach our full potential.

R' Schorr ZT"L adds another dimension to this. In the passuk quoted above it says, "*Byom hazeh bau midbar Sinai* - on this day they arrived at Sinai". Rashi, quoting from the Mechilta, asks that it should have said "*bayom hahu*". The Mechilta answers that the passuk is teaching us that the Torah should be fresh/beloved to us as if it were given today. The question arises, however, that this passuk is actually referring to the time **before** the Torah was given. R' Schorr explains that the Torah is teaching us that even the **preparation** for Matan Torah needs to be done with *chiddush*. Our motivation and desire for accepting the Torah must be imbued with a sense of invigoration and renewal.

In conclusion, we must realize that every Jew has an internal reservoir of *chiddush* which was inherited from our *avos hakedoshim*. Let us use this *koach* in preparation for a mitzvah and during the mitzvah itself to boost our *avodas Hashem* to its highest and most complete level.

Rabbi Pomerantz a rebbi at Arie Crown, is an alumnus of the kollel.

Halacha Encounters

Simchas Choson V'Kallah

Rabbi Henoch Plotnik

"Whoever derives benefit from a *seudas choson* and does not gladden him transgresses five expressions of "sound" (*kolos*)... If he does indeed cause simcha he will merit Torah that was given amidst five sounds as it is written, (in this week's parsha 19:16) "On the third day there were sounds and lighting.""

What is considered the proper fulfillment of this mitzvah and does it vary from individual to individual? In truth, there is a mitzvah to be mesameach even when not partaking of the seuda. Chazal meant, that should one benefit from the seuda, he has an absolute obligation. (Sefer Prisha on the Tur 65:2).

This mitzvah should not be taken lightly, as the famous Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer teaches us that the wicked Izevel merited that her hands and legs and head were saved from her disgraceful mauling death in the merit of the performance of this mitzvah. (The Tur in fact refers to this mitzvah as a "mitzvah gedola", prompting the S'dei Chemed to ask why the Shulchan Oruch omits the word "gedola")

Although the Zohar Hakadosh (parshas Emor) instructs us to actually give a wedding gift, the Gemara offers other methods to fulfill this mitzvah. According to Rashi (Brochos 6b), the mitzvah consists of verbally expressing words that cause the choson happiness. Saying complimentary things about the Kallah are included in order to make her more beloved to her choson. (The Radal on the Pirkei D'Rebi Eliezer is not sure if this includes praising the choson as well). Dancing and merrymaking are certainly included as well. According to the Ezer Mikodesh, a Talmid Chochom's very presence is a proper fulfillment of the mitzvah, without any active show of being mesameach. It is brought in the Chumash Medrash Halacha (R' Y.M. Stern - Yerushalayim) that Rav Elchonon Wasserman HY"D said that the mitzvah consists of becoming a partner in the simcha, and therefore is incumbent upon everyone to actively participate.

Music was always considered an integral part of the simchas choson v'kallah. It is well known from the Maharil (in the name of the Mahari Segal) that a couple should even move their wedding a long distance to facilitate music playing if it is outlawed in their home town. (As an aside, the *takono* of allowing only a single drummer at weddings in Yerushalayim was a rabbinical response, most notably by the au-

thor of Imrei Binah, R' Meir Auerbach, to a plague that ravaged Yerushalayim in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was an extra gesture of mourning the churban. The parameters of this takono are a subject of debate). In fact, Rishonim permitted a gentile to play music for a Shabbos wedding feast, although it is not common practice anymore. By the same token, the Maharshal (Yam Shel Shlomo, Beit-zah 5:6) permitted dancing for a choson and kallah on Shabbos despite the issur d'rabonnon under normal circumstances to the contrary.

The Gemara tells us that Talmidei Chachomim may display many forms of simcha activity, even those that would seemingly be degrading to their dignity. It is brought that the B'nei Yisoschor would pour the choson a glass of wine at the wedding meal. Talmidim of Rav Elchonon HY"D have reported how their rebbe had a special dance that he performed exclusively at weddings that would keep the participants transfixed and spellbound (heard from Rav Mendel Kaplan zt"l)

Throughout the generations, Poskim have warned against allowing in the Satan as a participant in the merrymaking. The Chayei Odom firmly held that displays of "magic", even mere illusions were forbidden to be performed at weddings. The Oruch Hashulchan decried any form of mixed dancing in the strongest language (Even Ho'ezer 65:3). Of course, these communities that have a time honored custom of holding a "mitzvah-tantz" at the conclusion of a wedding are following a tradition upheld and defended by tzaddikim and kedoshim and may not be ridiculed. It is important, though, to bear in mind the admonition of the Sefer Chasidim that one who cannot resist temptations that may present themselves at a wedding should not attend at all! Care must always be taken to ensure that the simcha is truly one that we can refer to as "simcha bim'ono" - a joy in the heavens as well as on earth.

In conclusion, Rav Mordechai Gifter zt"l explained the maamar chazal we open up with in a novel fashion. What is the meaning of "transgressing five kolos"? Is it analogous to five aveiros? The Rosh Yeshiva explained that the opportunity to be mesameach at such a holy venue, with the presence of the shechina no less is a precious one. Someone who doesn't seize this opportunity "passed by" the opportunity, just as someone passes by (lehavdil) a store that is running a big sale. It is an opportunity to acquire the segula of the five kolos - certainly not one to be missed!

Rabbi Plotnik an alumnus of the kollel, is the rav of Beis Tefillah.