

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING



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- Compiled by Rabbi Moische Dovid Lebovits
- Reviewed by Rabbi Benzion Schiffenbauer Shlita
- All Piskei Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita are reviewed by Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita



Simchas Chosson Vekallah

For one reason or another, in the month of June weddings are common. We will discuss one aspect of going to a wedding which is *simchas chosson vekallah*.

We all attend weddings and have a great time eating, talking, dancing etc. However, one has a *mitzvah* to rejoice with the *chosson* and *kallah*, do we all do this? What is the *mitzvah*? How should we do this *mitzvah*? By dancing? By saying nice words? Is going to the *chupah* sufficient to fulfill this *mitzvah* or one has to actually attend the *seudah*? How far must one go in order to fulfill this *mitzvah*? All these and other questions will be addressed in this issue.

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בלבד...
(ברכות תי)

The Mitzvah

It is a *mitzvah d'rabbanan* to make a *chosson* and *kallah* happy,¹ as part of the *mitzvah* of *veahavta lereiyacha kemocha*.² This *mitzvah* lasts for the entire seven days of *sheva berochos* and not only the night of the wedding.³ Included in the *mitzvah* is to make sure that the *chosson* and *kallah* have what they need for their wedding.⁴ Some opine that the main *mitzvah* is only where the *chosson* and *kallah* are needy people or if there are not many people who will be attending the wedding.⁵ There is a separate *mitzvah* of “bringing a *kallah* to the *chupah*.”⁶

Reward

One who makes a *chosson*⁷ happy *zocheh* to *Torah*, is like he has sacrificed a *korbon todah* in the *Bais Hamikdosh*, and it is as if he built one of the ruined houses in *Yerushalayim*.⁸

Enjoyment from the Wedding⁹

One should not have enjoyment from the without making the *chosson* and *kallah* happy.¹⁰ Nonetheless, even if one did not have enjoyment from the *seuda* one still has a *mitzvah* to make the *chosson* and *kallah* happy.¹¹

It is preferable not to come at the end of the wedding when there will be no food to eat since the *chosson* may feel bad.¹² However, today this is not the case so the above would not apply.¹³ Even where there is no food, if one says “I did not come to eat only

1. Shulchan Aruch E.H. 65:1, Aruch Ha’shulchan 1, Ahavas Chesed 3:6, see Betzel Hachuchmah 4:162. Some say that the *chosson* has a *mitzvah* to make himself happy (opinion of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita quoted in Yismach Lev 1:page 172).

2. Rambam Hilchos Avel 14:1.

3. Sdei Chemed Mareches chosson vekallah 13, Tzitz Eliezer 18:68:3, see Yaskil Avdi O.C. 8:20:58.

4. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 306:3.

5. Ahavas Chesed 3:6.

6. Refer to Rambam ibid. Some say this is the *badeken* (Prisha E.H. 65:5, Bais Shmuel 3). Refer to Taz 2.

7. Some say there is no need to make both the *chosson* and *kallah* happy (Derech Sicha 1:page 152).

8. Refer to Mesechtas Berochos 6b. See Ahavas Chesed 3:6.

9. Some say the reason why the *kallah*'s family pays for the meal at the wedding is because then if one does not make the *chosson* happy and he has joy from the wedding, it is not as if he disgraced five voices (Tammei Haminhgaim 980:page 413).

10. Refer to Mesechtas Berochos 6b. Refer to Yismach Lev 1:page 173 on this *Gemorah*. Refer to Yismach Lev 1:page 376:90 one who gets food brought home to him from a wedding is not called having enjoyment from the wedding, and he does not have to make the *chosson* or *kallah* happy. See Ezer Mikodesh E.H. 65. Refer to Yismach Lev 1:page 171.

11. Bais Shmuel E.H. 65:1.

12. Refer to Biur Halacha O.C. 170:19 “orchim.”

13. Halichos Ben Odom Lechaveiro page 439:footnote 29.

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to say *mazel tov*” then coming at the end is okay.

How to make them Happy?¹⁴

- **Dancing** - Some say in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of making the *chosson* and *kallah* happy one has to actually dance in front of them.¹⁵ This is true even for a *talmid chachum*, and he will not be belittling his honor by dancing before the *chosson* and *kallah*.¹⁶
- **Talking** - The *Gemorah*¹⁷ says that one should dance and tell the *chosson*¹⁸ that the *kallah* is beautiful and grateful etc (even if this is not true, since one can be referring to her *midos*).¹⁹ Some say one can fulfill the *mitzvah* by just wishing the *chosson* etc a *mazel tov*.²⁰ Included in talking is telling the *chosson* words of *divrei Torah*.²¹
- **Just Being There** – Some say one has fulfilled the *mitzvah* of rejoicing with a *chosson* and *kallah* by just being in the wedding hall and adding to the amount of people that are in the room.²² It is very common for one to go to a wedding and stand and watch those who are dancing. In this case one has still fulfilled his obligation of making the *chosson* and *kallah* happy.²³ One should not dance with the *chosson* too much since it may tire him out.²⁴
- **Mesader Kiddushin etc.** - The *Rav* who is *mesader kiddushin* and those who say the *berochos* underneath the *chupah*, or at *bentching*²⁵ have fulfilled the *mitzvah* of making the *chosson* and *kallah* happy.²⁶
- **Singers – Helpers** – Those who sing at the wedding and those who hand the *chosson* or *kallah* a drink or something to eat (while dancing or at any other

14. Some say the reason why the *kallah's* family pays for the meal at the wedding is because then it will not be an issue of “enjoying the *seuda* of the *chosson* and did not make him happy.”

15. Aruch Hashulchan E.H. 65:3. Refer to Sefer Matamim 1:page 63:145 (new print).

16. Mesechtas Kesubos 17a.

17. Mesechtas Kesubos 17a, Meiri Mesechtas Kesubos 17a.

18. Refer to Ben Yehoyada Mesechtas Kesubos 16b why the *Gemorah* says *kallah* not *chosson*.

19. Shulchan Aruch E.H. 65:1. Refer to Bais Shmuel 2, Chelkes Michokak E.H. 65:1, Aruch Hashulchan E.H. 65:1.

20. Opinion of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita quoted in Yismach Lev 1:page 171. Refer to Shoneh Beshoneh (Journal) 5740:pages 152-155.

21. Refer to Divrei Torah 1:8:pages 11-12:8.

22. Opinion of Harav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Yismach Lev 1:page 171, see V'ein Lamo Michshal 6:page 88. See Yismach Lev 1:page 506 quoting the opinion of Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Refer *ibid* to the opinion of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita.

23. Halichos Ben Odom Lechaveiro page 441.

24. Shevet Halevi 10:248.

25. Yaskil Avdi O.C. 8:20:58:2.

26. Ezer Mekodesh E.H. 65:61.



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time) have fulfilled the *mitzvah*.²⁷

- **An Important Person-** An important person who attends a wedding has fulfilled the *mitzvah* of making the *chossan* and *kallah* happy.²⁸
- **Presents** - One who gives a present to the *chossan* or *kallah* has fulfilled the *mitzvah* of making the *chossan* and *kallah* happy.²⁹ Some *poskim* say it is proper to give the money etc to the *chossan* or *kallah* as opposed to the parents of the *chossan* and *kallah*.³⁰

Today, in many places the *chossan* and *kallah* sit at the head table. One should go tell them *mazel tov* etc and this way one can fulfill the *mitzvah* of making the *kallah* happy as well.

More on Dancing

As mentioned before, dancing at the wedding is a fulfillment of making the *chossan* and *kallah* happy. However, the *poskim* stress that doing so should not be accompanied with *pritzos* etc.³¹ In addition one should be careful not to dance in a way which can be dangerous (i.e. jumping on tables etc).³² There are many *poskim* who frowned upon placing the *chossan* on one's shoulders for various reasons.³³ However, one may place the *chossan* on a chair and lift the chair.³⁴

Being too Happy

One is not supposed to be too happy in this world because we do not have the *Bais Hamikdosh*.³⁵ Some say this even refers to the happiness one should have at a wedding,³⁶ while others say in a place of a *mitzvah* the above does not apply. According to the above opinion, it would make sense why on *Purim* and at weddings the mood of happiness is elevated even to higher levels than all year-round. Even if we are to say that happiness to

27. Ibid. Refer to Yaskil Avdi O.C. 8:20:58:2.

28. Ezer Mikodesh E.H. 65, see Minhag Yisroel Torah 4:page 201. Refer to Chavos Yuer 205 (stringent), Shraga Hameir 7:31 (lenient) and V'ein Lamo Michshal 6:page 87 if a *talmid chachum* can play a musical instrument at a wedding or it is considered belittling him.

29. Taamei Haminhagim 980.

30. Teshuvos Vehanhugos 3:404. Refer to Shevet Hakehusi 3:302. See Techumim 1:page 235. One can give money to a non-religious couple and there is no concern that they will use the money for forbidden actions (V'ein Lamo Michshal 6:page 108).

31. Mieri Mesechtas Berochos 6b, Ahavas Chesed 3:6.

32. V'ein Lamo Michshal 6:page 108.

33. Refer to Kaf Hachaim 669:22, Vealeihu Lo Yeibol 2:pages 184-185:14, Orchos Rabbeinu 1:page 124:1, Shevet Halevi 6:203:2, Tzitz Eliezer 12:73:3, Oz Nidberu 13:59, Yismach Levi 1:page 177.

34. Natei Gavriel Nesuin 41:14.

35. Mesechtas Berochos 31a, Shulchan Aruch O.C. 560:5, Magen Avraham 12.

36. Taz O.C. 560:7, Mishnah Berurah 20. See Shevet Halevi 7:203, 8:283.

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a higher level is permitted, it still should not be accompanied with frivolous activities.³⁷

People should not perform “magic tricks” in order to make the *chosson* and *kallah* happy.³⁸

Looking at the *Kallah*

One is not allowed to look at the *kallah* even if by doing so it will make her more beloved to her *chosson*.³⁹ However, this is in many cases very hard to avoid especially if someone dances in front of her when she comes into the men’s section. Some say it is referring to looking for an extended period of time, but just to take a quick peek is permitted.⁴⁰

Other *Halachos* Related to Making a *Chosson* and *Kallah* Happy and regarding weddings

Not learning and bringing a *Kallah* to the *chupah*

The *halacha* is that one may forgo his learning and go to bring a *kallah* to the *chupah*.⁴¹ However, this is a very broad statement which will be explained below.

Some say the above is only referring to a person who actually sees the *chupah* about to take place, but one who knows (but does not see) that there is a *chupah* in the city does not have to forgo his learning to attend the *chupah* etc.⁴² Some say one should still go even in this case.⁴³

Mitzvah Tantz

There is a time honored custom by *chassidisha* weddings to have a *mitzvah tantz*⁴⁴ (where different family members dance with the *kallah* while separated by a *gartel* etc).⁴⁵

37. Mieri Mesechtas Berochos 6b, Refer to Minhag Yisroel Torah 4:pages 202-203 in depth. Refer to V'ein Lamo Michshal 6:pages 98-101 in great depth. Refer to Aruch Hashulchan O.C. 560:8.

38. Chochmas Adom 89:6 (difference if Jew or non-Jew), Yabea Omer Y.D. 5:14, Shraga Hameir 2:17, see Betzel Hachochmah 4:13 who is lenient.

39. Shulchan Aruch E.H. 65:2, Rama (permitted to look at her jewelry).

40. Yam Shel Shlomo Kesubos 2:3.

41. Shulchan Aruch E.H. 65:1. Refer to Techumim 1:pages 231-232.

42. Bais Shmuel E.H. 65:3, Chelkes Michokak 2, Aruch Hashulchan E.H. 65:4. Refer to Yabea Omer Y.D. 4:19.

43. Aruch Hashulchan ibid. Refer to Derech Sicha 1:page 153. See Techumin 1:pages 231-236 in depth.

44. Refer to Lekutei Maharich seder hanhugos yom hachuppah 3:pages 753 (new), Darchei Chaim Vesholom 1053, Minhag Yisroel Torah Nesuin pages 207-208.

45. Be'er Moshe 4:131.



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Many *poskim* say that this custom is permitted,⁴⁶ while others maintain it is considered showing *chibah* which one should further himself from.⁴⁷

There is a discussion in the *poskim* if the grandfather of the *kallah* may dance with her in public.⁴⁸

Damaging During a Wedding

It can happen that while one is dancing one may damage someone by throwing off his glasses and the glasses may break, or one can damage him in other ways. Is the damager responsible for his actions, or maybe we can say that since he is doing a *mitzvah* he does not have to pay?⁴⁹

Some say we do not have the ability to have proper happiness for the *mitzvah*, and one is obligated to pay for the damages.⁵⁰ Others say the *halacha* only applies when one broke something etc in the place where the *simcha* took place. Accordingly, if one broke someone else's glasses by stepping on them, he is obligated to pay since there is no *mitzvah* being done by the fact that he was jumping on the glasses.⁵¹ In any event, there are many other *halachic* factors which apply and one who has a question *lemaseh* regarding this should ask a competent *halachic* authority for guidance.⁵²

Man dressing up as a Woman

The *Rambam*⁵³ in a *teshuva* speaks very strongly against those who dress up like the opposite gender for *simchas chosson vekallah*. Besides for the prohibition involved, it often leads to mingling with the other gender. This is how many other *poskim* rule as well.⁵⁴

Taking Videos

It is very common for a Jewish man to take videos of women at a wedding etc, however, this should be avoided.⁵⁵ A man should not look at a wedding video which

46. Refer to Bach E.H. 21, Bais Shmuel 21:11, Shulchan Haezer 2:pages 79-79b, Chazon Yeshaya 42:pages 119-120.

47. Refer to Bach ibid, Be'er Heitiv 9, Pischei Teshuva E.H. 65:2, Sdei Chemed Kuf 7:page 476, Lekutei Maharich 2:page 79, Aruch Hashulchan 7, Divrei Torah 1:6, Soveh Smochos (Yosef) 1:14:21. Refer to Otzer Haposkim 21:46:2.

48. Refer to Bais Shmuel 21:14, Be'er Moshe 4:133, Miyum Halachah 2:54, Refer to Avnei Yushfei 2:121-122 regarding guests taking flowers etc home from the wedding hall.

49. Refer to Rama C.M. 378:9.

50. Aruch Hashulchan 695:10.

51. Refer to opinion of Harav Nissim Korelitz Shlita in Yismach Lev 1:page 179, and see ibid:page 378.

52. Refer to Modanei Yom Tov 2:61 in great depth. See Yismach Lev 1:page 179.

53. Stated in Masei Rokeach page 1.

54. Yechaveh Daas 3:68, Yabea Omer Y.D. 5:14, Nisuin Kehilchoso 13:26, Malbushei Kavod Vesiferes page 70, see Chazon Ovadia Purim page 200.

55. Refer to Oz Nidberu 10:35, Be'er Moshe 3:154:3.

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shows women dancing.⁵⁶

Mixed Dancing

Many times one is faced with the question if he may attend a wedding where there will be mixed dancing. Although there is a *mitzvah* to make a *chosson* and *kallah* happy, a man is forbidden to dance with a woman and vice versa.⁵⁷ One who finds himself by a wedding where there is mixed dancing has an obligation to leave the wedding.⁵⁸ However, if this will cause strife in the family one should consult with his *Rav* on the correct manner to behave.⁵⁹ Some *poskim* suggest one only stay for the *chupah*.⁶⁰

The *Chofetz Chaim*⁶¹ says since mixed dancing is akin to *giylo areios*, the *Shechina* does not rest upon such people, the couple will not succeed, there will be fights between them, and their children will not be respectable in the eyes of *Hashem* (loose translation).

A Jewish male should not be a waiter for women and vice versa.⁶²

Special Funds

Included in the *mitzvah* of *simchas chosson vekallah* is to make sure that there is enough money for the wedding. In many cities there is a special fund for this called “*hachnoset kallah*.” This is a tremendous help for the parents of a *chosson* or *kallah*. Besides for the fact that the funds help make sure that the kids get to the wedding, it is also a great help for the parents who are not sure how they can pay for the wedding.⁶³

Spending Too Much Money

The following is a loose translation of the words of the *Be'er Moshe* (*Debretziner Rav zt”l*).⁶⁴ “I want to discuss one area, and that is the waste of money that is spent on weddings and other *simchas*. In every *simcha* making a new garment is needed since it is a disgrace to go with the same suit for two *simchas*. For this people have to work overtime instead of learning and going to a *Bais Medrash*. This behavior causes bad in and out of the house. Who knows how much worry and stress comes because of this? In addition, this causes other sins by making the wedding in a very expensive hall. So much money

56. Refer to Hachuppah Vehanesuin 17:7.

57. Refer to Binyomin Zev 307, Biur Halacha O.C. 339 “I’hukel,” Igros Moshe E.H, 1:97 2:13, Minchas Yitzchok 3:109:1, Teshuvos Vehanhugos 2:651.

58. Refer to Halichos Ben Adom Lechaveiro page 445:footnote 75 quoting many *poskim*, Hachuppah Vehanesuin 17:4.

59. V’ein Lamo Michshal 6:pages 95-96. Refer to V’ein Lamo Michshal 5:page 215, Yabea Omer E.H. 3:10:9.

60. Ibid.

61. Ahavas Chesed 3:6.

62. Refer to Halichos Ben Adom Lechaveiro page 444:footnote 71.

63. Ahavas Chesed 3:6.

64. Be’er Moshe 4:147:31:pages 236-237.



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is spent on flowers for the wedding and the next day the flowers are thrown away in the garbage. Thousands of Jews have no food to eat and so much money can be spent of one *simcha*! Money is thrown out in the garbage. All *Rabbonim* should speak with their congregants regarding this issue. Once this is done all will listen.”

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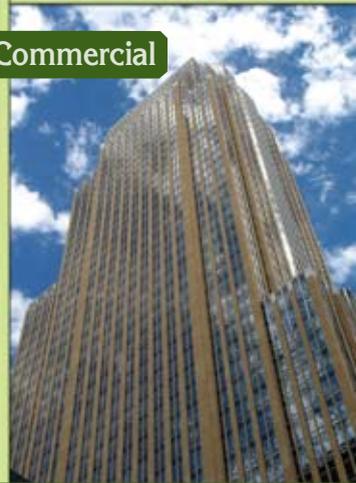
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