

GIVING JOY TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM PART 2

by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen

Last week we discussed the basic laws behind the mitzva (commandment) of giving joy to the bride and groom. It is instructive to discuss some examples of how this mitzva has been fulfilled by Orthodox Jews throughout the generations:

The Talmud tells us that some of the greatest Rabbis in the generation would greatly exert themselves to please the bride and groom at their wedding. One would hold a myrtle branch in front of the bride and groom and dance in front of them. Another would juggle in front of them. On one occasion someone criticized one of these Rabbis for degrading himself by dancing with such energy. However, the Talmud teaches us that the Rabbi was correct in acting in such a way because it was for the sake of pleasing the bride and groom .

More recently, there lived a great Tzaddik (righteous man) by the name of Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer zt"l. He was well known for the importance he attributed to the mitzva of giving joy to the bride and groom. He would stand on a table and dance with great zeal. On one occasion a good friend of his was getting married for the second time. Both bride and groom were in their seventies! Nevertheless Rabbi Blazer acted as he always did at weddings. When the stunned onlookers asked why he was acting in such a way he answered; "Is there any difference between a bride and groom of eighteen years of age or seventy years of age?!"

On another occasion, a young man who was far away from his home was to get married. Rav Blazer traveled a very great distance to attend the wedding. People were surprised because he was not known to be especially close to this young man. He explained to the surprised onlookers that it is a very great act of kindness to attend someone's wedding and that we cannot estimate true value of such a mitzva.

The key factor in determining the actions of these great Rabbis was their ability to share in the joy of others. This is one of the most important aspects of good interpersonal relations - to try to feel the joy of our fellow. If we do that then we can strive to emulate the great actions of our ancestors

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