

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

At the service read at a *siyum*, celebration on completion of a section of study, the *kaddish hagadol* is recited. Assuming that ten adult males are present, may a child recite this *kaddish*, especially if he is the one celebrating his own *siyum*?

The issues:

- A) A *siyum*; a child making a *siyum*
- B) *Kaddish*; *kaddish hagadol*
- C) A minor reciting *kaddish*

A) *Siyum* [adapted from Halochoscope x:35]

One could celebrate any *mitzvah* observance. However, most *mitzvos* do not take a long protracted time, so the actual *mitzvah* does not call for a special celebration. Torah study as a *mitzvah* applies all the time. If one celebrated all the time he would have no time to study! The Talmud is divided into sections, studied separately for a time period. Thus, completing a section amounts to completion of a group of *mitzvos* of Torah study. This offers an opportunity to give thanks for the merit of completing the *mitzvah*. This source for a *siyum* is a passage about a holiday celebrated annually when the process of preparing the wood for the offerings was completed. [See Baba Basra 121b, Rashbam, Nimukei Yosef. Mishna Taanis 4:8, commentaries. Biur Hagra YD 246:76.]

A second source is a Midrashic reference to the feast that Shlomo Hamelech made for his servants when he was informed by Hashem that he would be granted wisdom. From here we learn that one makes a feast for the completion of the Torah. The gift of wisdom that Shlomo was granted completed his Torah. [See Shir Hashirim Rabah 1:9.]

A third source is a Talmudic dictum that Abaye would call for a *Yomtov* for the Rabbin when a young Rabbi completed a tractate of Talmud study. This implies that the student should certainly celebrate; even outsiders feel joy. [See Shabbos 119a.]

A fourth source discusses the obligation of a student to attend the *siyum*. The penalty for inattendance seems to be rather serious. [In its context, this could be due to the disrespect for the teacher.] This might be so that the student does not miss the conclusion, including vital details. Perhaps attendance shows dedication to see the project through to the end. This source does not make reference to the celebration. However, others point out that the third source implies that the colleagues of the *mesayem* have an obligation to attend. [See Baba Basra 22a. Yam Shel Shlomo end B.K. Perek 7.]

The first source touches on the issue of reciting *shehecheyanu* on the completion. This *brocha* is recited on the privilege of a *mitzvah* combined with appreciation of the auspicious time. It is recited on *mitzvos* that occur from time to time and on good tidings. The poskim discuss whether it may be recited upon completion of the writing of a *sefer*.

While it is not customary to recite it at a *siyum*, the concepts of the joy at reaching this milestone and feelings of thanksgiving do apply. The poskim discuss adding *shehasimcha bim'ono*, 'true joy exists only in Hashem's abode', for the *zimun* at a *siyum*. This is added for a wedding. For various reasons, it is not recited at a *siyum*. [See Rokaiach 371. OC 223, Shaarei Teshuva 10. Aruch Hashulchan YD 246:45.]

The second source is cited as the basis for *Simchas Torah*, when the cycle of reading the weekly *Parshiyos* is completed. [See Hagahos Ashri, end Sukah, Tur, BY, Sh. Ar. OC 669, Rema, commentaries.] It is also cited as a source for the shouts of joy at the completion of a section of Torah, the '*chazak*' at the end of a *chumash*. The most obvious source for this traces it to the words that Hashem said to Yehoshua, basically, at the conclusion of the *Sefer Torah*, and the beginning of his *sefer*.

The words '*chazak ...*' express the need to strengthen oneself. One should not rest on his laurels, having reached what he feels is the completion of the study 'course'. Rather, he should use this opportunity to move on with more strength. The Torah has no end or completion, but is unlimited and infinite. Though the written and oral forms have beginnings and ends, there is always a qualitative infinity. It is also endless in its cyclical or circular sense. The real idea of the *siyum* comes from the completion of the review of the knowledge. In fact, the first words uttered upon completion refer to this review, '*Hadran*' is translated as either 'we *will* return to ...' or 'we *have* [now] returned to ...'. This is also one reason given for the term '*masechess*' for tractate. This word hints at the continuous movement back and forth on a loom, weaving the cloth without necessarily coming to an end. [Some add, this is why Jewish printers traditionally number the page on which the text of a tractate begins as 'page two'. One should never think he has completed it.] This is the reason we do not wait to restart the Torah, but begin immediately after ending. The same is done at a *siyum masechess*, where people usually start the next section right after ending this section. [See Taamei Haminhagim 337-8 729, Likutim 92.] Even when completing it for the first time one really is finishing his first review. Each unborn child studies the entire Torah for the first time in the womb. An angel causes him to forget it upon birth, and for his entire life he tries to remember it by reviewing it. [See Nidah 30b.]

The third source refers directly to the completion of a *masechess*, and is the main source for the *siyum*. Most of the customary prayers seem to be as old as the *siddur*. As oral traditions, they presumably date to the times of the Prophets, in some form. The *siyum* is there to thank Hashem publicly for the fortune of completing, while acknowledging that it came with toil and hard work. [Yam Shel Shlomo *ibid.*]

A minor is not Scripturally obligated in *mitzvos*. The poskim debate whether the *mitzvah* of *chinuch*, to train children, is incumbent on parents, or obligatory on the minor himself. There is a Scriptural *mitzvah* to teach Torah to a child. This is clearly considered *bona fide* Torah study, regardless of whether it is an obligation on the child *per se*. It is from this very *mitzvah* that the adult's *mitzvah* of Torah study is derived. Proofs abound that children's study is considered the optimum fulfillment of the *mitzvah*, and is rewarded as such. It saves a city from destruction, and even keeps the world going. Furthermore, some poskim indicate that a child is indeed obligated in this *mitzvah*, if he is old enough to study. He is also eligible to be considered a *talmid chacham* for whom one must rise in

respect. Thus, completion of his study is cause for celebration. The *siyum* can be viewed as the celebration of the *mesayem*, with participants as his guests, or a communal celebration for all participants. If it is the latter, all attending adults can join in the child's celebration. It could be viewed as the abstracted joy of Torah study in and of itself. Or it could be seen as a celebration of the *mitzvah*, which could depend on the level of obligation of the one performing it. In any event, if the *mesayem* reads the concluding passage, he is teaching it to the attendees. Thus, the adults present are also studying, so there is no reason to diminish the level of the *mitzvah*. [See Shabbos 119b Yuma 82a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 470:Levush 3 616:2 YD 244:1 (Shach, Taz, Ar Hash 3) 245:5 8 (Ar Hash 1 5) 246:1 (GRA 2) Sh Ar Harav Talmud Torah 1:1. Nitei Gavriel Pesach II:43:10.]

B) Kaddish; kaddish hagadol

Kaddish is the Aramaic for holy, that is, an extremely holy praise of Hashem. This lofty prayer is for the future glorification of Hashem when *Moshiach* comes. The responses have extreme qualities and may be said even when other responses are forbidden due to interruption. Due to its holiness, *kaddish* is deemed a *davar shebikedusha* that may only be recited in the presence of a *minyan*, ten men. The poskim indicate that *kaddish* and *kedusha* were both instituted at the time that *shemone esrai* was formalized by the court of Ezra, which included prophets. Some say that *kaddish* was instituted later, but was invested with the same sanctity. Some say that it was instituted earlier, after the first destruction, as a *tefilah* for restoring Hashem's glory.

Kaddish is referred to in the Talmud by the Hebrew for its centerpiece, *Yehi shemo hagadol*, may His great name be ... This gives rise to discussion about the original language of composition. *Tefilos* were originally recited from memory, and there is no written record of a full Hebrew version. Some suggest that *kaddish derabanan*, recited after Torah study, was always recited in Aramaic. This was the most efficient language for study, and was understood by more of the common folk. Therefore, every *kaddish* used Aramaic. Some say that being such a holy prayer it was felt that it should rise directly to Hashem, rather than be conveyed by angels. This way, the angels could not tamper with it. Angels do not understand Aramaic, and they would leave *kaddish* alone. Some say that a Hebrew version was used by the sages of Eretz Yisroel, where it is appropriate that all *tefilos* should be in Hebrew. In other places the Aramaic version was used.

Kaddish has three parts: the main section is from *yehai shemai* until *da'amiran be'alma*; the beginning, from *yisgadal* until *yehai shemai* is a *hazmana*, invitation, as a *davar shebikedusha* requires an invitation or introduction to the *minyan*; the parts added after *da'amiran be'alma* are prayers for peace, acceptance of *tefilos*, or for the welfare of scholars. This section is considered *minhag*, custom.

There are a few categories of *kaddish*. At the end of a communal service we recite *kaddish yasom*, the 'orphan's' *kaddish*. This is considered part of the service. It is recited after *aleinu*. It may be recited by a minor. One of the common explanations is that it was instituted for a minor orphan who cannot lead the rest of the service. If no orphan is present, it should still be recited by another person, since it is part of the service.

Kaddish derabanan is recited following studying *Torah sheb'al peh*, the Oral Torah. It appears to be a *davar shebikedusha* in its own right. Some say this *kaddish* even if the

minyana was not present for the study and came later. The prevailing practice is to repeat a small passage in the presence of all ten before *kaddish*. The Talmud says, the world subsists on '*yehei shemei raba de'agadeta*', or *kaddish* recited after studying non-*halachic* texts. Therefore, most *poskim* require some *agadic* study after finishing the regular study.

Kaddish shalem is recited after *shemone esrai* or its connected prayers. *Chatzi kaddish* is recited to separate between parts of the service.

Kaddish hagadol has a long *hazmanah* referring to *techiyas hamaisim*, the revival of the departed. Ashkenazim recite it at a burial with the standard ending, and at a *siyum* with the *kaddish derabanan* ending. This seems to have been the original *kaddish derabanan*. The Yemenites say it after all study. [See Brochos 3a 21b Shabbos 119b Sukah 39a Megilah 23a Sotah 49a, Tana D'bai Eliyahu Raba 6 7 17 21 Sofrim 19:12, Poskim. Rambam, nusach tefila. Tur Sh Ar OC 55:1 3, 56 98 132:2 234, YD 376, DM 8 9, commentaries. Yesodei Yeshurun I:Kaddish. Gesher hachayim II:23:4:4.]

C) A minor reciting kaddish

The Talmud debates whether a minor may exempt an adult, even in a Rabbinic obligation. The minor is obliged, at best, Rabbinically, meaning he his obligation is doubly Rabbinic. The adult is obliged in a single Rabbinic obligation. Therefore, he may not act as a *shliach tzibur*, leading the congregation in a *davar shebikedusha*. However, he may recite *kaddish yasom*, at the end of the service, also known as *kaddish basra*, the last *kaddish*. Some even allow a minor below the age of *chinuch* to recite certain *kadeishim*.

The *poskim* also say that minors recite *kaddish derabanan* after they finish studying. The simple meaning of this is that if there are ten adults present, the minors may recite the *kaddish derabanan*. We have mentioned that some *poskim* maintain that ten adults must participate in the study to qualify for this *kaddish*. Apparently, ten minors also qualify. The world is maintained by the recital of *kaddish derabanan*. And the world is maintained by the Torah study of children. Perhaps it is the combination of the two.

It could mean that they recite in the presence of ten minors, as a form of *chinuch*. However, the *poskim* seem to say that a minor recites it even in the presence of adults. One need not be an *avail* to recite this *kaddish* either, although it is meritorious for the departed soul. Therefore, if a minor is an orphan, it is even preferable for him to recite it.

Accordingly, it would seem proper for a minor who is *mesayem* to recite the *kaddish hagadol* as well. Since it is essentially *kaddish derabanan*, and according to some, this is the exact text of *kaddish derabanan* even when there is no *siyum*, children may recite it. [See Brochos 53a, Poskim (Rosh, Maadanei Yomtov). Tur OC 215. Sh Ar OC 155: Ba'er Hetev, Elya Raba 1. YD 376:4 Rema, commentaries. SH'uT Bais Yehuda 22.]

In conclusion, the minor may recite this *kaddish*.

On the parsha ... *These are the toldos [those born to] of Moshe and Aharon .. the sons of Aharon ... [3:1-2] Since Moshe taught them Torah, it was as though they were born to him. [Rashi].* Torah study brings one to completion. The joy of completing a study section is like the joy of the birth of a new child, or maybe rebirth at *techiyas hamaisim* - hence *kaddish hagadol*.

Sponsored in memory of Yitela bas R. Shimon a"h, whose *yahrzeit* is the 6th of Sivan, 1st day *Shavuot*. ❧

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