

Acharon Shel Pesach - Cherish the Moment

When Shehecheyanu Isn't Appropriate

We all know the shehecheyanu blessing. We sing it at every happy occasion.

The shehecheyanu is recited on every Jewish holiday, except for today - the last day of Pesach.

What most people don't know is that this blessing is made over a heartfelt joy. That means that any time you feel a real heartfelt joy you can recite the shehecheyanu.

The interesting thing about the shehecheyanu is that at the happiest moments in our personal lives we actually don't say the blessing. At a bris, would this not be the most appropriate time to recite the shehecheyanu - on such a happy occasion when a Jewish child merits to be entered into the eternal covenant with G-d? But no, we don't say it because the child is hurt in the process and our joy cannot be complete when someone else suffers.

At a Bar mitzvah, when a Jewish boy finally gets to put on Tefillin, a true Jewish milestone, a shehecheyanu would be expected. Yet, we don't say it because along with the great joy comes a great responsibility of keeping all the Mitzvos.

Even at a Jewish wedding, the happiest moment in the young

couple's lives, the ecstasy of joining with one's soul mate in marriage, we don't say it... I wonder why!

The Only Holiday

Yet we do recite shehecheyanu upon the arrival of every holiday. The women say it at candle lighting and the men say at Kiddush. Even on Yom Kippur, when there is no Kiddush, the men recite the shehecheyanu all together right after Kol Nidre.

About a hundred years ago two little girls played in the home of their grandfather the Rebbe Rashab, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. One little girl, Chaya Mushka, asked her older sister, "What are the last days of Pesach?" Her sister answered that they were a holiday like all others but little Chaya Mushka did not agree. "That can't be, because we don't say the shehecheyanu on the last days of Pesach."

The Rebbe, sitting in the adjacent library heard the little girls' conversation and it reminded him of a similar event from his own childhood. At the holiday meal, the Rebbe related to his family that when he was young, someone raised this same question. Unable to reach a satisfactory answer, they brought the question before their grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek. The third Lubavitcher Rebbe explained to his grandchildren that the last days of Pesach are a continuation of the first days. The first days of Pesach are a celebration of the Exodus from Egypt, our very first redemption at the hands of Moses. The last days of Pesach are a celebration of our final redemption that will come speedily at the hands of Moshiach. Since shehecheyanu can only be said on something that already took place and the final redemption has yet to materialize, we cannot recite the

shehecheyanu over it.

The Lesson

People never live “in the moment,” as they say. No matter what we are doing, we are always busy remembering what happened or worrying about what is going to happen. At work, we dream about vacation. On vacation we worry about how much work is piling up back at the office! Enter the shehecheyanu. “Bless You G-d... for bringing me to this moment!” This blessing teaches us to cherish the moment without regurgitating the past or grabbing at the future.

We are about to recite the Yizkor, at that time we will be reunited with our beloved departed. These are precious moments — so let’s try to block out any other thoughts from entering our minds for these few minutes. This is one of the reasons for sending all who don’t have to say Yizkor out of the room — so they shouldn’t disturb those who do say it. This way, they will be able to cherish this experience and carry it with them for the rest of the year.