

# **HAMODIA**

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## **It's About Time!**

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The article "It's About Time!" that appeared in the Readers' Forum of last week's Hamodia (December 12, 2003) decrying the fact *simchas* are notorious for not starting and not ending on time brought to mind the following story that I once heard someone relate about his first encounter with Rav Avigdor Miller, zt"l. In the 1950's this fellow was told that he really should hear Rav Miller speak. Since Rav Miller would be speaking at a Melava Malka in the near future, he decided to attend. Well, the evening dragged on and on with speech after speech. Finally it was time for Rav Miller to speak. He got up, looked at his watch and the said, "Rabosai, it is late and time for all of us to go home and go to sleep. A Gutta Voch!" and sat down.

Rav Miller spoke more than once against the practice of having *simchas* that require people to stay up late and hence go to sleep at an unreasonable time. He felt that this could be injurious to one's health. He further pointed out that eating at a late hour is not a good practice.

There are, of course, a variety of reasons as to why people do not arrive on time to a *simcha*. Some of these are

- Those with small children have to feed and put their children to bed. Even with the best of intentions this can take considerable time and make the parents late.
- Older children also require time in the evening. There is dinner to be served to them, homework to be done, etc.
- Many men do not get home from work until relatively late. While they may be able to leave work early occasionally, they simply cannot do this for every *simcha* that they are, Baruch Hashem, invited to.
- Baby sitters sometimes show up late, one gets an important phone call that must be dealt with right away, and who knows what else.

- Since people know that the *simcha* will start late, it makes no sense to rush things and get there on time. Of course, the *simcha* starts late, because the people do not come on time. This has led to the vicious cycle that we now are living with.

Sometimes one receives an invitation that says such and such a time “B’dyuk.” Even this is often meaningless. Indeed, it was once pointed out to me tongue in cheek that “B’dyuk” stands for “Biz the Yidden Vellen Kummen!”

What is someone who is making a *simcha* to do to make sure that it starts on time and ends at a reasonable time? I have a suggestion that I believe can help with *Sheva Brochos* at least. Let the person making the *Sheva Brochos* get a dozen or so of their close relatives and friends to promise that they will come at the starting time, say 7:30. Also, make it clear to the speakers that bentsching will be no later than 9:15, and that they have at most 10 minutes to speak. Furthermore, limit the number of speakers to at most three. Finally, when inviting people to the *Sheva Brochos*, point out to them the arrangements just described and that no matter what, the *simcha* will start at 7:30 and end at 9:30. Given this scenario presumably those who can, will come on time, because they have now been assured that the event will start and end on time. While this is not a cure-all, it is, hopefully, a good beginning and will help solve what has become a chronic problem in our community.