

Igros Kodesh letter #1927, vol. 7, p. 58

B”H
8 Kislev 5713
Brooklyn.

HaRav HaChossid... R. Peretz [Motchkin] *sheyichyeh*,

Shalom u'vracha!

[...] As to what you wrote parenthetically with regard to *mashke*, which was apparently in continuation to what I spoke about with HaRav HaChossid... Rabbi Bentzion Shemtov, it seems that he did not communicate the reasons that were given. It is my opinion that for two reasons, the situation today is different with regard to the copious consumption of *mashke* that was once common:

1. *Anash* by now have been given the capability, by way of the numerous easy *maamorim* and *sichos* that explain understandable concepts, to influence their listeners without having to resort to copious amounts of *mashke*. Even a little quantity is quite enough.
2. Since particularly in recent times what is demanded of us with greater emphasis is to “spread the Wellsprings **outward**,” the copious consumption of *mashke* is likely to seriously impede this task. This was not such an issue when the Wellsprings of Chassidus were disseminated only within the circle of Chassidim.

My reasoning is supported by something I heard in Riga from my father-in-law, the Rebbe: “Nowadays (and he was referring not only to that specific time, but rather to the recent years during which he had begun to diminish his intake of *mashke*) I am as if I had just taken *mashke*.”

Even though the ostensible reason for this was “doctor’s orders,” it is patently understood that this was merely a superficial reason. Only people outside the Chassidic brotherhood, *chitzonim* who see things superficially, would find such an answer satisfying - unlike Chassidim, who understand that Chassidus demands *p’nimiyus*.

Without a doubt, then, this is a comprehensive directive. In the spirit of the principle that “the body follows the head,” Chassidim follow our Rebbe. So when the Rebbe said that he was currently as if after taking *mashke*, this is a directive for all Chassidim. Furthermore, it **empowers** all Chassidim to achieve such a state.

In the continuation of my conversation with Rabbi Shemtov, I told him explicitly that my intent is not, G-d forbid, a blanket prohibition (against alcohol). Rather, it just seems to me that there is a major difference between the effect of a Farbrengen with a little *mashke*, and a Farbrengen in which the participants drink so much that they go out of their *keilim*.

With blessings for success in your public activities, which will serve as a conduit and a vessel for drawing down and receiving blessings and success in your personal activities,