



Sailor in iconic V-J Day Times Square kiss photo dies at 95 - Horr, The Associated Press, February 18, 2019

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The ecstatic sailor shown kissing a woman in Times Square celebrating the end of World War II has died. George Mendonsa was 95.

Mendonsa's daughter, Sharon Molleur, told The Providence Journal Mendonsa fell and had a seizure Sunday at the assisted living facility in Middletown, Rhode Island, where he lived with his wife of 70 years.

Mendonsa was shown kissing Greta Zimmer Friedman, a dental assistant in a nurse's uniform, on Aug. 14, 1945. Known as V-J Day, it was the day Japan surrendered to the United States.

The photo by Alfred Eisenstaedt became one of the most famous photographs of the 20th century.

It was years before Mendonsa and Friedman were confirmed to be the couple.

Friedman died in 2016 at the age of 92.

Mendonsa died two days before his 96th birthday.

1. Rabbi Yair Hoffman, Hand in Hand, 5 Towns Jewish Times, May 25, 2017

It is now described as “the slap seen round the world,” wherein Melania Trump slapped the president's hand away when her husband reached for hers as they arrived in Israel. It happened as the couple disembarked from Air Force One in Tel-Aviv and strode over to meet waiting dignitaries. One theory behind the rebuff was that the president had felt bad at rushing the First Lady while she was putting on makeup on Air Force One. They were late and needed to get out on the tarmac. The president tried to make it up to her by reaching out to her hand, but she was in no mood for reconciliation. Perhaps there is another theory. Melania could have been reading up on the proper protocol for how to conduct oneself in the Holy Land. It is the land of the Jewish people, and the Jewish people follow Shulchan Aruch...

Why do people do it? According to a New York Times article by Margot Slade, “the couples may do it because they want to flaunt the strength of their relationship, because they want to mask the weaknesses in their relationship, or because, as several psychologists put it, they are affectionate people who are very much in love.” What is the reaction engendered in people? The NYT article continues: “‘They are normally private acts from which others are normally excluded,’ said Charles T. Hill, an associate professor of psychology at Whittier College in California who has studied dating couples. ‘Psychologists offer a range of explanations for [other people's discomfort]. In very simple terms, Dr. Hill noted that public displays of affection force people to become an unwilling audience. And that, he said, is discomforting. ‘According to Keith E. Davis, a social psychologist at the University of South Carolina who has examined friendships and love relationships, ‘Affectionate behavior confronts some people with the unsettling reality that they are alone.’ ‘Then, too, he said, some people have strict standards of propriety. ‘Witnessing a public display of affection can be a threat to their standards,’ he said. ‘They may reason that if you do it, other people will begin to do it.’”...

Some would say there is no way that Melania Trump was aware of this Rema, notwithstanding that her son-in-law studied at the Frisch yeshiva. The author would agree. However far-fetched this explanation of the episode may seem, the point is that we can use it as a learning experience. After all, Purim was also a time of Matan Torah, and there is a proper place for everything. The problem is particularly acute with photo albums of weddings. If a wedding album is being shown to others, then certainly the photos should not include physical displays of affection between the chassan and kallah.

2. Shemot 32:6 (Alhatorah.org translation)

וַיִּשְׁלִימוּ מִמְחֻלֹת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׂוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיָּשֻׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק:

They rose up early on the next day, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

3. Ho'il Moshe to Shemot 32:6

לצחק – גם מכאן נראה לי חיזוק למה שכתבתי בפרשת בשלח על "מחולות" שאין ענינם ריקוד בלבד אלא גם כלי השיר שמנגנים בהם בשעת ריקודם, וגם בלשונות צרפת ואשכנז, Spielen, Jouer, הוראתם צחק ונגן...

To play – from here too I see support for what I wrote in Parshat Beshalach about the word "mecholot", that they do not refer to dancing only, rather, they even refer to the musical instruments that they play at the time of their dances, and so too in French and German "Jouer" and "Spielen" are understood to mean playing [meaning a game, or with laughter] and playing [an instrument]...

4. Rashi to Shemot 32:6 (Rosenbaum and Silberman translation)

לצחק – יש במשמע הזה גילוי עריות, שנאמר: לצחק בי (בראשית ל"ט:י"ז), ושפיכות דמים, כמה שנאמר: יקומו נא הנערים וישחקו (שמואל ב ב'י"ד), אף כאן נהרג חור.

TO PLAY – There is implied in this term besides idolatry also sexual immorality, — as we find the word used in, (Genesis 39:17) "to mock (לצחק) me" where unchastity is meant as is evident from the context — and bloodshed, as it is said, (II Samuel 2:14) "Let the young men arise and play (ויצחקו) before me; [and they caught every one his fellow by the head and thrust his sword in his fellows side]" — here, too, Hur was assassinated (Midrash Tanchuma 3:9:20).

5. Bereishit 26:8 (Alhatorah.org translation)

וַיְהִי כִּי אָרְכִי-לְוֹ שָׁם הַנְּמִים וַיִּשְׁקֶף אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ מִלְּקַו פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּעַד הַחַלּוֹן וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה יִצְחָק מְצַחֵק אֶת רַבֵּקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ:

It happened, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was caressing Rebekah, his wife.

6. Rashi to Bereishit 26:8 (Rosenbaum and Silberman translation)

כי ארכו – אמר: מעתה אין לי לדאג, מאחר שלא אנסוה עד עכשיו. ולא נזהר להיות נשמר. וישקף אבימלך – ראהו משמש מטתו.

WHEN HE HAD BEEN THERE A LONG TIME – He thought, "From now I need have no fear since they have not molested her up to now", and he was not sufficiently strict in guarding his actions (Genesis 20:13).

AND AVIMELEKH OBSERVED, ET CETERA – He saw him having sexual relations.

7. Shadal to Bereishit 26:8

מצחק את רבקה אשתו – מעשי געגועים שאין אדם כשר עושה עם אחותו (אך אין להאמין שהיה יצחק משמש מטתו במקום שהיה אפשר ליושבי בית אחר או לעוברי דרך לראותו בעד החלון), מליצת מצחק את אין ענינה כמליצת מצחק ב... (בא אלי לצחק בי {בראשית ל"ט:י"ז}) – המצחק את רעהו הוא מצחק עמו ושניהם משתעשעים; והמצחק ברעהו הוא לבדו מצחק ואין חברו מצחק...

Playing with Rivkah his wife – [minorly intimate] acts which a proper person does not do with their sister. (However, it is impossible to believe that Yitzchak would have sexual relations in a location that could be seen by the inhabitants of another house or passer-by simply by looking through the window.) The phrase "metzachek et" is not the same as "metzachek b..." (e.g. "he came to me to molest me", Bereishit 39:17), as one who is "mesachek et re'ehu", is playing together with his friend, and both of them are enjoying it, but one who is "metzachek b're'ehu", is simply alone in playing with his friend, and his friend is not playing with him.

8. Chizkuni to Bereishit 26:8

וישקף אבימלך, בעד החלון – י"מ לא שהיה החלון פתוח אלא שמתוך שהיה נעול הבין אבימלך המעשה...

And Avimelech looked out, at the window – some explain [that this means] not that the window was open, rather, from the fact that it was closed, Avimelech understood what was happening...

9. Tz'ror Hamor to Bereishit 26:8

וישקף אבימלך בעד החלון. בדרך כישוף...

And Avimelech looked through the window – using “Kishuf” [black magic]...

10. Yevamot 90b (Davidson Edition translation)

ישוב מעשה באדם אחד שהטיח באשתו תחת התאנה והביאוהו לבית דין והלקוהו לא מפני שראוי לכך אלא שהשעה צריכה לכך מיגדר מילתא שאני:

And again, an incident occurred involving a certain person who cohabited with his own wife under a fig tree in plain view, and they brought him to the court and flogged him, not because this punishment was fitting for him, as it is not prohibited by the Torah for one to engage in relations with his wife wherever he chooses, but because the hour required it, to discourage others from engaging in licentious behavior. This shows that the court can uproot a Torah mitzva even by means of a positive action such as stoning. The Gemara answers: Safeguarding a matter is different. As stated above, the court may uproot a Torah mitzva so as to strengthen Torah observance in general, as was the case with the prophet Elijah.

11. Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 58a (Linzer translation)

ר' בנאה הוה קא מציין מערתא, כי מטא למערתא דאברהם, אשכחיה לאליעזר עבד אברהם דקאי קמי בבא. א"ל: מאי קא עביד אברהם? א"ל: גאני בכנפה דשרה וקא מעיינא ליה ברישיה. א"ל, זיל אימא ליה: בנאה קאי אבבא. א"ל: ליעול, מידע ידיע דיצר בהאי עלמא ליכא. עייל, עיין ונפק

Rav Bana'ah used to mark out caves [where there were dead bodies]. When he came to the cave of Abraham, he found Eliezer the servant of Avraham standing at the entrance. He said to him: What is Avraham doing? He replied: He is sleeping in the arms of Sarah, and she is looking fondly at his head. He said: Go and tell him that Bana'ah is standing at the entrance. Said Avraham to him: Let him enter; it is well known that there is no passion in this world. So he went in, surveyed the cave, and came out again.

12. Nemukei Yosef to Bava Batra 58a (Linzer translation)

שמעינן מהגדה זו דרך ארץ שאינו ראוי להתנהג עם אשתו בכיוצא בדברים הללו בפני אחרים

We see from this story that it is not appropriate for a person to act with his wife in such ways in the presence of others.

13. Mappah, Even Ha'ezer 21:5 (Linzer translation)

יש אומרים דאין לנהוג אפילו עם אשתו בדברים של חיבה, כגון לעיין ברישיה אם יש לו כינים, בפני אחרים

There are those who say that one should not act in public even with his own wife in ways of affection, such as to inspect her [sic] hair to see if it has lice.

14. Derisha, Even Ha'ezer 21:2 (21:4 in some editions)

ונלע"ד דדוקא לשכב בחיקה כההוא מעשה הוא דאסור אבל לעיין ברישיה כשהוא יושב אפשר דליכא מאן דפליג. ועיין בתשובת רשב"א (ח"א) סימן אלף קפ"ח דמשמע מינה דגם לעיין ברישיה לחוד הוי מדברים המביאים לידי חיבה שמדמה אותו ליציקה על הידים והצעת המטה ע"ש

And it seems to me that only the lying in her lap like in that story is prohibited. But simply to look at his head when he is sitting, it is possible that no one argues [and it is permitted]. See Responsa Rashba 1:1188 which sounds like even looking at his head is considered to be those things that lead to affection, as he compares it to pouring [water] on [his] hands and setting up the bedspread [which are prohibited during Niddah].

15. Taz, Even Ha'ezzer 21:1

וקשה דא"כ למה הוצרכו להזכיר דמעיינה ברישיה ונראה לי דתרי טעמים היו שם שלא רצה ליכנס שם דחדא משום אברהם גופיה דאין לו לאדם לעשות מילי דחיבה עם אשתו בפני אחרים משום צניעות כהיא מעשה שהטיח באשתו תחת התאינה והלקוהו וגם כאן הוא מעין תשמיש בזה שנית שלא יעורר תאות אחרים על ידי זה שיבא לידי הרהור שיזכור תשמיש על ידי זה על כן אמר דמצד אברהם עצמו היה שלא כהוגן ח"ו ששכב בחיק אשתו שנית אפילו עיון ברישיה לחוד אינו נכון כדי שלא יביא אחרים לידי הרהור על זה השיב אברהם דאפילו השכיבה בחיקה אין איסור כי בהאי עלמא אין צריך לצניעות דידוע שאין כאן תשמיש ממילא אין כאן איסור אפילו לדידיה מכל שכן לאחרים אם כן מוכח מזה דאפילו עיון בראשו לחוד אינו נכון בפני אחרים.

ונראה דיש חילוק בזה דעיון לחוד אינו מפני אחרים דוקא באשתו דכל הרואה זה נזכר לקירוב שלהם ע"י תשמיש ויבא לידי הרהור ע"י זה משא"כ בבתו ואחותו ונכדו דאין כאן זכרון תשמיש מותר בפני אחרים אבל שכיבה בחיקה פשיטא דאסור בכולם...

...And it is hard to understand, why did they need to even mention that she was looking at his head? And it seems to me that there were two reasons there why he did not want to enter there, one was because of Avraham himself – that a person should not do actions of affection with his wife in front of others because of tzniut, just like in that story where a person cohabitated with his wife under the fig tree and they flogged him, and so too here it is similar to sexual relations. Secondly, that one should not arouse the desires of others through this that this will bring them to thoughts that remind them of sexual relations through the action that is being performed. Therefore, [Rav Bena'ah] said that from the side of Avraham himself, he acted inappropriately (chas veshalom) that he laid in his wife's lap, secondly, even looking at his head alone is inappropriate in order that it should not bring others to inappropriate thoughts. To this, Avraham responded that even the laying in her lap is not prohibited, because there is no need for tzniut in that world, as it is known that there are no sexual relations in that world. As a result, there is no prohibition for him, and certainly for others, and if so, it is proven from here that even just looking at his head is prohibited in front of others.

And it seems that there is a difference in this, that looking [at one's head] is not due to others, [and is prohibited] specifically with one's wife, as an onlooker is reminded of their intimacy through sexual relations, and can come to inappropriate thoughts through this, which is not the case with a daughter, sister, and granddaughter, that there is no reminder of sexual relations, and would be permitted in front of others. However, laying in her lap is obviously prohibited for all...

16. Respnse B'nei Banim 1:37:1

However, for a husband to hold his wife's hands while they walk on the street, it seems that even for a Torah scholar there is no concern, if it is not in the situation of [creating a] fence, as necessary, as it is obvious that there is no sexual affection, since everyone does this as times, women with women and men with men, and so too in the Talmud...

אמנם לאחוז בעל בידי אשתו בהליכה ברחוב נראה שגם בתלמיד חכם אין בזה חשש, אם לא במקום סיג לפי הצורך, שפשוט שאינו ענין חיבת אישות שהכל עושים כן לפעמים אשה עם נשים וגבר עם גברים וכו' וכן בתלמוד עיין במסכת פסחים דף

...But to hold the hand of his wife who is not a Niddah, what idea of thoughts of sexual relations could this have? and if we come to prohibit this, we should also prohibit passing a child from a husband to his wife, or serving food from her hand to his in front of others, all of which are prohibited when she is a Niddah...

עכ"ל. אבל לאחוז ידה של אשתו הטהורה מה ענין הרהור תשמיש יש בזה, ואם באנו לאסור זה נאסור גם הושטת תינוק מבעל לאשתו והגשת אוכל מידה לידו בפני אחרים שכל אלה אסורים בימי נדתה

17. Aruch Hashulchan, Even Ha'ezzer 21:7

וי"א דאפילו עם אשתו אין ראוי להתנהג בדברים של חיבה יתירה בפני הבריות כמו לעיין בראשו וכיוצא בזה ואין לך יפה מן הצניעות And some say that even with his wife it is not fitting to act in ways that show extra affection in front of others, such as to look at his head, and other similar things, and there is nothing more beautiful than tzniut.