

Toasting at a *Sufra*

Georgian transcript:

მასპინძელი: ...ერთი გადაურჩეველი მაგარი, ნაკითხი, ჭკვიანი, მჭერმეტყველი გადასარევი კაცი და მინდა ვადღეგრძელოთ ბატონი სპარტაკ წიქარიძე, ვითარცა თამადა ჩვენი! გაგიმარჯოს არჩილიჩ, სულ აი ესეთ გემრიელ სუფრებზე გეთამადადოს და კაი ამბებში.

თამადა: იკა, იკა, ერთი თხოვნა მაქ შვილო რა, შენ მანდედან შემიწყვე ხელი თორე, დარბაზი რო, ჩვენ კი მართალია წყნარად ვიქნებით, მაგრამ დარბაზი რო დიდია ეხა, საერთო დარბაზია და აქ ხმაური ყოველთვის იქნება და გავუგოთ ხოლმე ერთმანეთს რა.

ყველაფერი მეგონა, მარა თუ მე ეხლა თამადაობა მელოდა აქა, აი ეს არ მეგონა; მაგრამ ეტყობა როგორც პატარძალს არ აცდება ხოლმე საქორწინო ღამეს ისე არ ამცდა ეს თამადაობა მეცა.

კარგით, იყოს ნება თქვენი, ვადიდოთ ღმერთი: დიდება მაღლსა შინა ღმერთსა, ქვეყანასა მშვიდობა და კაცთა შორის სათნოება.

დღეს დიდი დღეა, სულთმოფენობისა. სულთმოფენობის მაღლი შეგვეწიოს ყველა ჩვენგანს. დღეს, ორმოცდამეათე დღეს, სწორედ ეხლა გადმოვიდა სულიწმინდა, ეხლა გადმოვიდა ადამიანებზე, ამიტომ არი რომ, დღევანდელი დღე ითვლება ერთ-ერთ ყველაზე დიდ დღესასწაულად ქრისტიანულ სამყაროში და როგორც აღდგომაა მოძრავი, ისე დღევანდელი დღეა მოძრავი და ყველა აღდგომის ორმოცდამეათე დღეს აღინიშნება. მაშ ასე, სადღაც ძალიან დიდი ხნის წინ, სადღაც ორიათასი წლის წინ, ამ დღეს გადმოვიდა სული წმინდა კაცობრიობაზე. ღმერთო, შეგვეწიე, გვაცოცხლე, გვაპატიე შეცოდებანი ნებით და უნებლიეც, და მოგვეც სიყვარულის ძალა. გაგიმარჯოთ! დღევანდელი დღის მაღლი შეგეწიოთ, ყველა თქვენგანსა და მთელ საქართველოს.

English translation:

Host: I want to honor a well-read, smart, eloquent, extraordinary man – Spartak Tsiqaridze as our *tamada*¹!

¹ A *tamada*(თამადა) is the toastmaster at a Georgian *sufra* (სუფრა) - feast. There are two types of *sufra*; a festive one, also referred to as *keifi* (ქეიფი), and a mourning one called *kelekhi*(ქელეხი). This particular *sufra* is a celebration of a wedding and baptism and therefore is a *keifi*. A toast proposed at *keifi* is called *sadgedrdzelo* (სადღეგრძელო), etymology of this word is related to one's longevity. Consequently, every time there is a *sadgedrdzelo*, for someone or something, they are wished to live or last long. The toast at *kelekhi*, referring to people who have passed away, is called *shesandobari* (შესანდობარი). The etymology of which has to do with forgiveness in order to emphasize the importance of being forgiven by God in afterlife...

Gagimarjos², Archilich³, may you always be a *tamada* for such *sufra*s and on such good occasions.

Tamada: Ika, Ika⁴, I have one request son, please; Assist me from there, because even though we'll be quiet, this is a common hall and there will always be noise here, so let's hear and understand each other.

I would think anything, but I would not have thought that being a Tamada awaited me here. But just as it cannot be eluded by the bride on the wedding night, so being a Tamada cannot be eluded by me today.

OK, let it be as you wish, let's praise God: Glory to God in the heavens, peace to the world and virtue among men.

Today is the great day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost. Let the mercy of this day help all of us. Today, the fiftieth day is the day when the Holy Spirit descended on men; this is

...A *tamada* is most often chosen by the host of the *sufra*s we saw in this case. The first *sadgegrdzelo*, is drunk for the *tamada* by the person who introduces him, after which the *tamada* "takes over" the feast and introduces every single toast. *Tamada* has to empty his glass "bottom up" every toast, this is commonly expressed by turning the glass upside down to prove that there is nothing left in it. It is considered that not even a drop should fall from it. Apart from introducing toasts *tamada* has to be able to organize the feast well; He decides the pace of the feast and adjusts it in accordance to situation. At the same time he is expected to maintain unity at the *sufra*, try to grasp everyone's attention and keep people entertained by proposing interesting, emotional and eloquent toasts and, in applicable cases, singing and/or dancing. Depending on the size of the *sufra*, *tamada* will either propose toasts about all the members or in case of larger *sufra*s only the ones that are mostly connected to the main purpose of the feast and the family hosting it.

There are some toasts that are present at every *sufra*, for example in most cases the first *sadgegrdzelo*, from a *tamada* is about either peace or God, there should also be at least one *sadgegrdzelo*, for motherland, and one *shesandobari* for the ancestors and people who passed away. (Tamada. In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved 4/19/2012, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamada>) (Supra. In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved 10/1/2012, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supra_\(feast\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supra_(feast)))

² *Gagimarjos* (გაგიმარჯოს) is a word with which every *Sadgegrdzelo*, starts. Its English equivalent can be cheers, but this translation diminishes the true meaning of this word. *Gamarjveba* in Georgian means victory, and since historically victory was one of the most important parts of a Georgian man's life, it became embedded in the culture in this way. *Gagimarjos* also is a greeting in Georgian; *Gamarjoba* means hello, it is the most commonly used greeting in Georgian language. Notice that the difference between *Gamarjoba* (hello) and *Gamarjveba* (victory) is only in one consonant, which got lost in the everyday speech, but originally the greeting originated from wishing each other victory. The first person making the greeting says *gamarjoba* (victory), while another responds, *Gagimarjos*, which means "victory to you". Similarly *gagimarjos* used in toasts means "be victorious".

³ In Russian often people are being referred to using their father's first name. For example if father's name is Nikolai, the person can be addressed as *Nikolaevich* for men and *Nikolaevna* for women, meaning "of Nikolai" or "Nikolai's". In Georgian this has been assimilated, and often representatives of older generation refer to each other in this fashion in everyday speech. In our case the name of the father is *Archil* and therefore the son is called *Archilich*. This does not replace the first name though; it is more used as a middle name. Even in official documents the full name is written in this way, but in Georgian the official documents use either "*dze*" (ძე) for men or "*asuli*" (ასული) for women. For example if the name of the father is *Archili*, the middle name of the son would be *Archilis dze*, (არჩილის ძე) meaning "the son of Archil" and "*Archilis asuli*" (არჩილის ასული) meaning "the daughter of Archil".

⁴ Ika is a shorter version of the name Irakli. In Georgia people often shorten or add some letters to names in order to make them sound friendlier. For example Ika would be used to refer to a family member, friend, a minor or someone of the same age who is at least an acquaintance, but Irakli would be used in more formal atmosphere, among people who are not well acquainted or with someone who is older.

why this day is considered as one of the greatest feasts in Christian world and as Easter is moving, so is this day, and it is celebrated every fiftieth day from Easter. So, a very long time ago, about two thousand years ago, this day the Holy Spirit descended upon mankind. God, help us, let us live, forgive us for our sins, both intentional and unintentional; and give us strength to love.

Be victorious! Let the grace of this day help each of you and Georgia as a whole.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2013 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated