



# Dancing from a Distance

The wedding ceremony itself was marked in a most majestic manner, with a ceremony attended by hundreds of Chassidim and world-famous Torah leaders of the time. A most memorable event that left profound impressions upon the hearts and minds of all the participants, remaining with them their entire lives.

The Rebbe's parents, Reb Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana, then resided in the city of Yekatrinsk, which at that time was under communist rule. As the wedding was to take place in Warsaw, Poland, the marriage waited for several months with the hope that the Rebbe's parents would be able to attend. But it became clear that the communist officials would not allow the Schneerson family, the pleasure of attending their own son's wedding.

Nevertheless, they were determined not to pass by such an occasion lightly. In her memoirs dated on 14 Kislev 5709, twenty years later, the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana recounts the joyous celebration that took place in their home. She describes in vivid detail the vast preparations that led up to the long-awaited evening, and goes on to articulate how their entire community joined in the celebration with song and dance. The onlookers watched with tears streaming from their eyes as their illustrious Rav danced with his father-in-law and brother, privileged to have been with him in this "bittersweet" moment, despite the heavy price that they would very likely be liable to pay for such "anti-government activity".

The following is a recounting of an episode from that same period, but is less well known. It is excerpts of a letter from the Rebbe's uncle, Rav Shmuel Schneerson, in which he recounts to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, the occurrences

**Yud Daled Kislev, 5689... A date that says so much to the Chossid of our time. One need not probe for a perfect description of its significance any further than the Rebbe's own holy words, "This is the day in which I was connected to you; and you to me..."**

of the preceding Shabbos, when the Rebbe's "oifruf" was commemorated in his father's home. This too, as was the case of the Chuppah, in the absence of the Chosson:

**I** speculate that you wish to know of what transpired here on the "big day". Let me begin from the "Oifruf", which I was privileged to have spent together with your parents, may they live and be well. On Shabbos morning following davening, there was of course, a grand Kiddush followed by a festive meal. Although the actual invitees were quite few, a vast crowd participated. A number of speeches were offered to honor the occasion, and the new couple. Above them all, stood the exceptional address of your father, who spoke through his tears of joy that flowed from the depth of his heart. It truly seemed to us as though the Chosson and Kalla sat here at our side, and no barrier of distance existed at all; as if you were with us in totality...

The meal continued on until eight o'clock in the evening, and nearly all the participants remained until its conclusion. In the midst of the meal, as our hearts rejoiced in an upbeat manner, we broke out in a joyous dance as would befit such an occasion - and perhaps even more than befitting... The dance did not only take place on the ground, but it ascended "upward"; we found place to dance upon the table as well. And not only did our souls spread forth, but even our bodies, i.e. we removed our outer garments revealing our tzitzis... All-in-all, it was a day of great celebration, one of sincere joy, truly magnificent. Even I myself "let-loose" a bit ...

As this day concluded, we began the preparations for the wedding, with which we busied ourselves for three consecutive

days, from Shabbos, until Tuesday evening.

We actually celebrated an authentic wedding, although the Chosson and Kalla were not here (something which may have had its affects on the celebration somewhat). However, truth to be told - taking into consideration the sense of joy in the air -, it really seemed as if you were here; not only in spirit, but in body as well!

The grand event commenced at seven o'clock in the evening. Your father opened by notifying all the partakers, with tears in his eyes, of this joyous moment, and requested of them all that they join him in his celebration. Despite the restricted space availability - which may result in some sweating - he asked that as true friends, they overlook the discomfort and sweat along with him on this momentous evening (and this they indeed carried out...).

This was followed by seven or eight speeches, and then your father delivered his words, as is customary. The speeches persisted until eleven o'clock in the evening. In the meantime, a music band was fetched, and the dance was on non-stop. This continued until seven o'clock in the morning. Again, our joy surged forth so much so that it caused an outbreak of our souls and bodies, and we revealed our tzitzis (those who wore no tzitzis opened their outer garments, revealing their shirts...) "And the city of Dyeneper' was beaming with joy!" ("Tzohala Ve'someicha...")

We conducted private dances between ourselves - the invitees, and we had communal dances with the remainder of the community. All-in-all it could be said that one who has not seen rejoicing as such, has not seen true rejoicing in his days...

