

לע"ו
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם דוב
בן הרב יהושע
נלב"ע כ"ד טבת ה'תשע"ג

ולע"ו
זוגתו מרת ליבא בת ר' ברוך
נלב"ע כ"א טבת ה'תשס"ד

נדפס ע"י
בנו

הרה"ת ר' אליהו וזוגתו מרת דליה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
העכט



The Street Will Dance

SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEIVA
RESTORED CELEBRATION OF BEIS HAMIKDASH TIMES



JOYOUS DANCING ERUPTS OUTSIDE 770, CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS 5742.

LEVI FREIDIN vga JEW 1997/6

DRAWING WITH JOY

As darkness settled over Yerushalayim and the first day of Yom Tov slipped away, the *Beis Hamikdash*, usually so docile and quiet in the evenings, became a whirlwind of activity. Tonight was *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, “the rejoicings of the water-drawings,” in honor of the rare *nisuch hamayim* (pouring of water on the *mizbeiach*) which would be held the following day. Throughout the year, every *korban* was accompanied by a libation of wine; on Sukkos, water was poured as well. In honor of this offering, the Yidden—who had gathered from all over Eretz Yisrael to celebrate Sukkos in the *Beis Hamikdash*—would hold a week of rejoicing.

There was much to be done. The outer courtyard of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the *ezras nashim*, would be the site of the dancing; huge wooden balconies for the women were quickly erected, and menorahs were placed all around for lighting. They were huge; every menorah had four basins for the oil, with wicks from the old tattered *michnasayim* (pants) and sashes of the Kohanim. Young Kohanim preciously balanced massive, 30 *lug* buckets of oil in their arms as they climbed steep ladders to fill them up. The menorahs were so bright that they illuminated the entire Yerushalayim; there was not a courtyard where a woman could not sift wheat to this light.

The celebrations commenced. As millions of people watched from all sides, the *chassidim* and *anshei maase* danced before them, juggling lighted torches in their hands and singing songs of praise to Hashem. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel juggled eight torches at a time; not one would touch the other. The Levi'im, who were stationed on the fifteen steps leading down to the *ezras nashim*, joined in the singing as well, and accompanied

it with harps, psalteries, cymbals, and so many musical instruments that they couldn't be counted.

What would they chant? The *chassidim*—people who never sinned—would say, “Happy is our youth which did not embarrass our old age” (i.e. that we did not sin in our youth and embarrass our older selves). The *baalei teshuva* would say, “Happy is our old age which atoned for our youth.” Both groups would say, “Happy is he who never sinned; and he who has sinned shall repent, and he will be forgiven.”

The Mishna states that someone who did not witness *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* never saw real rejoicing in his life. It was also a time of profound spiritual revelation: one of the reasons it was called “the rejoicing of water drawings” was because people drew *ruach hakodesh* from there. Yonah Ha'amitai—the famous *novi* who was sent by Hashem to warn Nineveh of their sins, and unsuccessfully tried slipping away from the task—was originally one of the regular people who came to the *Beis Hamikdash* for Sukkos, and it was then that *ruach hakodesh* rested on him.

The ecstatic celebrations continued throughout the night. A little before dawn, when the rooster first crowed, two Kohanim blew in their trumpets *tekia! terua! tekia!* signalling that it was time to begin the march towards the Shiloach stream, where the water

for the libation would be drawn. They continued blowing periodically as they marched out of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

A golden pitcher was filled from the Shiloach's water, and the retinue returned to the *Beis Hamikdash* through the “Water Gate”—which was named thus in honor of this occasion—and again, they blew three blasts. When it came time for the pouring, after the daily *tamid* was offered at about dawn, a Kohen ascended the *mizbeach*, turned to the left, and poured the wine and water simultaneously into the the two holes designated for it.

To the Kohen who poured the water the people called: “Raise your hand!” This is because it once happened that the Kohen charged with this duty was a Tzedoki—a sect that denies the validity of *Torah Shebaal Peh*, and thus does not believe in *nisuch hamayim*, which, as a *halacha leMoshe miSinai*, is not mentioned explicitly in *Torah Shebiksav*—and instead of pouring the water into the designated hole, he poured it onto his feet. All the people pelted him with their esrogim. From then on, the Kohen would always be told to raise his hand, to ensure he was doing his job properly.

It was a never-ending celebration. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya said: “When we were engaged in *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, our eyes saw no sleep [on Yom Tov]. How so? The first hour

“He spoke for several hours without a break. He spoke words of Chassidus, mixed and spiced with midrashim and Kabbalah with gimatriyaos, which he received from his father. [His words] were sweet to the ears, and all the assembled were amazed...”

[of the day we were occupied with] the morning *korban tamid*; afterwards *tefillah*, and from that to *korban musaf*. After that was *musaf* prayer, following which we went to the *beis medrash*. From there we went to eat and drink [at home], and afterwards *mincha*. From *mincha* to the afternoon *tamid*; and from that time on was *Simchas Beis Hashoeva...*” They managed to stay on their feet by dozing on each other’s shoulders during the dancing.

EARLY REVELATIONS

Even after the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, *Sukkos* continued being a time of rejoicing and happiness. But in *dor hashvi’i* it was taken to a whole new level. The Rebbe’s *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* farbrengens are possibly the single longest-standing tradition of our generation, dating back far before the *nesius*.

A few months after the Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s wedding, the Frierdiker Rebbe embarked on a trip to America with the goal of inspiring the Chassidim there, raising much-needed funds for the Yidden in Russia, and exploring the area as the possible future seat of Lubavitch. Most of the Chassidim and the Frierdiker Rebbe’s family stayed in Riga, Latvia and conducted the *Yomim Tovim* without him, their hearts aching from his absence. But there was a bright side: It was then that, for the first time, the Chassidim were able to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe’s greatness, something that he always tried to hide, but it was especially concealed in the presence of his father-in-law, the Frierdiker Rebbe. Now, with the responsibility to guide the Chassidim temporarily foisted upon him, a new side was revealed.

Throughout Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Chassidim followed the Rebbe’s lead in davening and *hanhagos*. During *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, and again on Shemini



Atzeres and *Simchas Torah*, the Rebbe farbrenged for hours.

In those years, the very fact that the Rebbe—who kept a low profile and shied away from the spotlight—held a farbrengen for a crowd was a novelty. But it was what happened during these farbrengens that truly astonished them.

In a letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe, Reb Elya Chaim Althois described the scene at the *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* and other farbrengens: “He spoke for several hours without a break. He spoke words of Chassidus, mixed and spiced with *midrashim* and Kabbalah with *gimatriyaos*, which he received

from his father. [His words] were sweet to the ears, and all the assembled were amazed... [One of the assembled was Mr.] Vekslir, a quiet man, a big critic, and a great intellectual in his own eyes. He came for the first time to hear with his own ears what he had been told by the *minyán* of Berlin, about the greatness of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe’s son-in-law, *shlita*. He stayed with the Chassidim until 2:00 in the morning. He left with amazement, and told me these words: ‘I have never seen or heard anything like this! *Ashrei yoladeto!*’”

From then on, up until 5725, the Rebbe farbrenged every year

(excluding the years when he wasn't around Chassidim during Tishrei).

The following year, 5691, the *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* farbrengen was held in the hall of Tzeirei Agudas Yisroel. As is recorded in Reshimos, the Rebbe spent the time expounding upon the inner meaning of the mitzvos of Sukkos and explaining a *sugya* in Gemara according to *pnimiyus haTorah*.

The Rebbe's innovative style was clearly on display here, and this was a precursor to the *reshimos* and *sichos* in the years that would follow—taking strands from all different parts of Torah and weaving them together into a holistic tapestry, and explaining everything according to Chassidus.

And there was another early indication of what was to come. The

Rebbe's profound *hiskashrus* to the Frierdiker Rebbe was evident even to casual observers, even in those early years, and in this *reshima*, it is the highlight of the farbrengen. The Rebbe explains at length how the sukkah and its dimensions and the lulav with its four types of plants represent *shlaimus*, completeness. But then he quotes a Midrash which says that the *possuk* “[three are beyond me] four I do not know” is referring to the four species—which seems to imply a certain deficiency. This, the Rebbe says in a short but charged paragraph, is because “after all, there are certain levels that are not within the ability of a person, no matter who he is, to reach on his own...Therefore, we are *miskasher* ourselves with the Rebbe, so

that he will guide us and we will follow in his path.”

In 5692, the Frierdiker Rebbe's court moved from Riga to Otwock, Poland for Tishrei, where the Rebbe joined him from Berlin, as he often did in those years.

Reb Moshe Eliyahu Gerlitzky related: “They rented a hotel where [the Frierdiker Rebbe] stayed with his entire family, and rooms were rented for the students as well. A few of us traveled from Lodz, probably thirty students, and we spent the entire month of Tishrei with the Frierdiker Rebbe. The Frierdiker Rebbe instructed the Rebbe to farbreng with the *olam* on *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* in the sukkah. The Chassidim were saying that we must call the Chassidim of the surrounding villages to come.

THE REBBE FARBRENGS IN THE SUKKAH ON CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS, CIRCA MID-5710S.



JEM 287286

“Until then, we didn’t know how well-versed the Rebbe was in everything. But at this farbrengen we heard such *gevaldike chiddushim*. He began with the Mishna, ‘Yehuda ben Teima says: Be bold as a leopard, swift as an eagle, quick as a deer and strong as a lion, to fulfill the will of your Father in Heaven.’ He farbrenged on this Mishna from 8:00 at night until 7:00 in the morning. He quoted Zohar, Kabbalah, Gemara, Mishnayos, Midrash, etc. etc., throughout the night. The crowd was astounded—*arais fun di keilim*. Until then, no-one knew that he was so knowledgeable. After that night we saw who he was.”¹

The notes of this farbrengen form one of the longest *reshimos*, and the small, closely-written words fill eleven pages of the Rebbe’s notebook; in print they take up seventy-six pages.

As seen above, it wasn’t only the breadth of knowledge that confounded the listeners, but the original approach—and the Chassidim weren’t the only ones commenting on it. On the fourth day of Chol Hamoied Sukkos of 5693, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked the Rebbe to repeat the main points of the *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* farbrengen (which had taken place in the yeshiva hall in Riga). When he concluded, the Frierdiker Rebbe commented that this style - of explaining *maamarei Razal* and so on - had existed in previous generations, “but the Rebbe [Rashab] *Nishmaso Eden* took this path, and went on a thin pathway - the 32nd pathway, which the Zohar calls a thin pathway.” The Frierdiker Rebbe continued with his own explanation into a *sugya* he had learned that day.²

The farbrengens continued in the years that followed, changing location together with the Frierdiker Rebbe’s court. The *reshimos* of these farbrengens are some of the longest we have.

It is interesting to note that the Tzemach Tzedek would also

hold farbrengens on *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* during the lifetime of the Mittlerer Rebbe. He farbrenged entire nights, one after the other. These were passionate, fiery farbrengens, and the Tzemach Tzedek’s dancing was so spirited that even the *yungeleit* could not keep up with him.³

FARBRENGENS FOR THE TALMIDEI HAYESHIVOS

After the base of Lubavitch moved to America, the newly founded Merkos L’inyonei Chinuch began officially hosting the Rebbe’s yearly *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* farbrengen. It was specifically for *talmidei hayeshivos*, and nearly all the yeshivas in New York participated, including Mesivta Chaim Berlin, Torah Vodaas, and Yeshivas Yitzchok Elchanan. The first of these farbrengens was held in 5702, and by 5706, the periodical magazine Kovetz Lubavitch noted that it had become an annual tradition among the New York *yeshivische kraizen*.

In her diary, Rebbetzin Chana describes her impressions from one such gathering:

I don’t want to lose the opportunity to write down the enjoyment I had last night, listening to my son shlit”a speak before a crowd of hundreds of people.

As far as the lomdus, I’m not the expert to measure it. The part that I did understand created a big impression on me with its rich content....

...It was very nice to see how many of the youth were present, and how much interest they demonstrated to everything connected to my son shlit”a. I saw how they looked at him with such love that it cannot be described. See how they run from the subways and cars, groups of them, how one is trying to overtake the other to grab a place faster, so that he should be able to see and hear [the Rebbe] better.

They were from all types of crowds. Olimishe, chassidishe, Polishe, Litvishe,

old and young, non-religious and orthodox. Women were there too. Everyone was looking for ways to set themselves up so that they can not only hear him, but to see him as well. Hashem should give him the health and success to be able to do his work, and accomplish what he wants without disturbances, with menuchas hanefesh and menuchas haguf.

The *sichos* were noticeably geared towards that crowd, with lots of sources cited in *nigleh*, as the Rebbe once commented: “I had to cite the source for everything, down to the *daf!*”⁴

But the Rebbe was also clear about his goal, as he said in a dramatic *sicha* in 5714:

It says in the Gemara that “while a woman talks, she spins [flax].” Since the primary activity of a woman in the times of the Gemara was to spin—wherever she is and whatever she does, she will eventually end up talking about her spindle.

The crowd probably suspects that as I continue speaking, I will sneak in a few minutes before the end to say that one must learn Chassidus.

Therefore, instead of people suspecting me, I will just say it out loud: Hert zich ain Yidden—Listen up Yidden! You must learn Chassidus!⁵

These yearly farbrengens continued up until 5725, when Rebbetzin Chana passed away.

THE JOYS OF WATER

During these farbrengens, the Rebbe elaborated at length on the theme of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, retelling the Gemara’s description in vivid terms and teaching powerful *hora’os* from each aspect of the story.

In some of these *sichos*, the Rebbe also spoke about a key issue in the whole celebration. On the surface, there seems to be something very strange at the heart of the whole concept of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*.

What is so exciting about drawing and pouring of the water on the *mizbeach* that merits such over-the-top delight? There are so many mitzvos we performed in the *Beis Hamikdash*, including on Sukkos itself, yet none inspire the exuberant joy that drawing the water does.

Why is this?

Chassidus asks the same question, albeit with a different twist: Generally, wine is a drink associated with joy; it is rich, tasty, and puts you in a good mood. Water is tasteless and boring. Yet, there is absolutely no celebration when we pour wine throughout the year. When do we dance for seven nights? When we pour water, the dull drink.

The inner meaning of this, as the Rebbe explained many times based on the *maamarim* of previous Rabbeim, is that wine, an enjoyable and tasty drink, represents *avodas Hashem* according to reason, *taam vodaas*. It is the type of *avodah* that a person can naturally relate to and enjoy. Water, on the other hand, represents an *avodah* that is not enjoyable in itself: *kabbalas ol* and *mesirus nefesh*—fulfilling Hashem's commands not because you understand it or relate to it, but because He said so.

Just as the foundation and beginning of a person's *avodah* must be *kabbalos ol*, *naaseh* and then *nishma*, so too the *avodah* at the beginning of the year, on (Rosh Hashanah and) Sukkos, is *kabbalos ol*—water.

Yet despite this, although it is not tasty and it isn't *geshmak*, we dance. Our joy isn't because we understand and appreciate what we're doing and are excited about it. On Sukkos we celebrate the fact that we are connected to Hashem and we will do anything He says. Wine may be tasty, but it is limited in its taste. Water, which represents the pure connection to *Elokus* achieved through *kabbalas ol* and *mesirus nefesh*, brings the ultimate

simcha. This applies today, after the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, as well; as the Alter Rebbe writes in his famous *drushim* on *nisuch hamayim*, every person has a spiritual *Mikdash* in his heart, and he must apply the lessons of *nisuch hamayim* to his life.

The Rebbe elaborated on this point at length throughout the years, explaining it in subtly different ways each time. The Rebbe's *farbrengens* on Sukkos were infused with the theme of *kabbalas ol* and *mesirus nefesh*, especially as it relates to the *yeshiva bochurim*, who were present at the time.

However, this still doesn't explain the issue on a simple, *nigledike* level. So in the *farbrengen* of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* 5712, the Rebbe proposes a fascinating answer.

There is another ritual that we do with a peculiar amount of excitement: the reaping of the wheat for the *omer* offering—*ketziras haomer*—which occurred on Motzei Yom Tov of the first day of Pesach. As the Mishna describes: All nearby towns would gather in the field to watch. When it got dark, the Kohen would announce, "Did the sun set?" And the crowd would answer "Yes!" This would happen three times.

Then he would shout three times, "Is this a sickle?" to which the crowd would roar in response each time, "Yes!"

"Is this a box?"

"Yes!"

"Shall I reap?"

"Yes!"

Before everything he did, he would announce what he was doing and he would be cheered on by the crowd.

Why all this? the Mishna asks. Because the Baitusim (a sect similar to the Tzedokim, who denied *Torah Shebaal Peh*) held that the *ketziras haomer* should be held at another time. Therefore, the reaping was done with a huge *shturem*, a great tumult, in order



to make them hear that they were wrong and to "remove the heretical ideas from their minds" (Rashi).

This, the Rebbe says, can also be an explanation for the unbridled joy of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*. As is evident from the story of the Kohen who was pelted with *esrogim* (see above), the Tzedokim opposed *nisuch hamayim* just as the Baitusim opposed *ketziras haomer* after Pesach. In order to emphasize that Tzedokim's position is incorrect, the *chachamim* decreed



THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE JOYOUS SINGING UPON LEAVING THE SHUL FOLLOWING MINCHA, 18 TISHREI 5741.

that the celebration of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* should be conducted with the greatest fanfare.

Then the Rebbe takes it one step further. The explanation according to *nigleh*, that we are celebrating our break from the Tzedokim, and the explanation of Chassidus, that we are celebrating *kabbalas ol*, are truly one and the same. The deeper reason behind the Tzedokim's opposition to *nisuch hamayim* was because they could not come to terms with the

concept of *kabbalas ol*. They could not handle that the Yidden said *naaseh* before *nishma*. As a Tzedoki once told the *amora* Rava: "You are impulsive people, whose mouths precede your ears! You should have first heard the Torah before you accepted it!" On these grounds, they also rejected *Torah Shebaal Peh*—they were not ready to accept the tradition of Moshe Rabbeinu with *kabbalas ol*.

So on Sukkos we celebrate water, *kabbalas ol*. We pelt the Tzedokim

with our esrogim and dance through the night, celebrating the fact that we, unlike the Tzedokim, have *kabbalas ol* and *mesiras nefesh*—an unconditional and unlimited connection with Hashem.⁶

When you break it down, the question is in fact the answer. Why do we rejoice with such joy if it makes no sense? Because it makes no sense!



FILL THE WORLD WITH FARBRENGENS!

In the summer of 5733, the Rebbe's *hanhaga* was different than usual. It was as if an emergency was afoot—he called for gatherings of children be held “in order to vanquish the enemy;” composed a special prayer for them to recite⁷; and instructed them to give tzedakah. At the time, no-one understood what the Rebbe was so concerned about; which unknown enemy was there a sudden emergency to vanquish?

Then, in what later became to be known as the Yom Kippur war, the Arab nations surrounding Eretz Yisrael converged on the tiny country to decimate it, *r”l*. Reservists were rounded up from shuls and sent directly to the front lines, as Jews throughout the world prepared for the worst. Hundreds of young soldiers died in the first few days. The Rebbe emerged as the single Jewish leader who lifted hopes in a time of horror, who showed strength when the situation seemed fatal, promising miracles “greater than the Six Day War.” (See Derher, Sivan 5776, “Gather to Save a Nation” for a more extensive overview.)

In the weeks after the war broke out, the atmosphere in 770—and the greater Jewish world—was no longer that of a typical Yom Tov. There was a feeling of urgency and desperation. The Rebbe went to the Ohel the day after Yom Kippur, which was quite unprecedented, and held an unscheduled farbrengen a few days later, on Yud-Gimmel Tishrei.

After speaking briefly about the fact that it was the *yom hillula* of the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe said:

“Seemingly, some explaining must be done, for when there is a place where Yidden are at war, how can there be a farbrengen?”

“However, it is known about the *baal hahillula* that he said: ‘The world says that first you try going under, and if that is not feasible you go from the top, but I say that *milechatchila aribber*, from the outset go from the top!’

“The way to help in these days is through *simcha*, in a way of *milechatchila aribber*.”

There were many wondrous, spiritual scenes at that farbrengen, as the Rebbe was clearly fighting on high for the success of the soldiers.

Then, on the first day of Sukkos there was another surprise, as is recorded by Rabbi Ahron Dov Halprin in his *yoman*:

“The announcement for the farbrengen was special; I happened to be standing nearby and heard it with my own ears. When the Rebbe was leaving *mincha* on the first day of Sukkos, he turned to Rabbi Hodakov, who was standing near the *aron kodesh*. I was standing right next to Rabbi Hodakov, and heard every word, as the Rebbe told him, “Nine o’clock, *maariv*, and afterwards there will be a farbrengen.” [Generally, a certain system was used for announcing the surprise farbrengens, and the fact that the Rebbe simply told Rabbi Hodakov about it in shul was out of the ordinary.] Those of us who were standing nearby obviously couldn’t hold ourselves in, and we immediately broadcasted the news before Rabbi Hodakov even managed to make an official announcement. There is no need to describe the great shock and excitement.”

This was noteworthy for a number of reasons. A few of years earlier, after someone had broken his foot at a farbrengen in the sukkah, the Rebbe had suspended holding farbrengens there. But more importantly, this

was the second night of Sukkos. The Rebbe would often farbreng on various Yomim Tovim, but it was always on the night leading into Motzei Yom Tov. No one had even heard of a farbrengen after *maariv* on Yom Tov, at the time of *seduas Yom Tov*. It had never happened before.

The farbrengen was held in shul without food or *l’chaim*. The Rebbe walked in without his *siddur*, since there would be no *bracha acharona*. For anyone who hung around 770, this alone was an odd scene. (It should be noted that the Rebbe held a similar farbrengen in 5731.)

During the *sichos*, the Rebbe announced that “from today until Simchas Torah, there should be constant farbrengens of *simcha*.” Specifically, “tonight, tomorrow morning, tomorrow night, two days from now in the morning,” and so on, listing all the days until Simchas Torah.

The Rebbe said that some of the guests, who are *mashpi'im* in their hometowns, suddenly become humble when they come to 770. But now is when they have time to farbreng! He quoted the famous Chassidic adage, “An onion should become of you, but Chassidus you should repeat,” and said that even if you only know *alef*, you can teach what you know. “Don’t be a *shin* with three dots, and also not three *shins*: *shiflus shel sheker* [false humility].” These farbrengens should be held at every opportunity, the Rebbe said, and if there is no *maskhe*

then farbreng without *maskhe*. Even in shul, people should tell stories.

The Rebbe concluded the *sicha* with the words, “Until it will be ומלאה הארץ לימים כמים לים מכסים”

After repeating once more that there should be constant farbrengens, the Rebbe added, “But it must be with the limitations of Zman Simchaseinu.” [Rabbi Halprin notes in his *yoman* that after the farbrengen, when Reb Yoel Kahn was doing *chazzara*, there was an argument between him and Reb Mendel Futerfas about the meaning of these limitations...]

“The end of the farbrengen was also special,” Rabbi Halprin writes. “The Rebbe himself began the niggun “*Hoshia es Amecha*” and, for a long time, encouraged the singing with all his strength. Suddenly, the Rebbe stood up and danced in his place, encouraging the singing in an extraordinary way. We could clearly see how the Rebbe, with all his might, is bringing down from on high the “*hoshia es amecha*”—salvation for the nation. The Rebbe left the shul encouraging the singing—he didn’t have to sit down for the *bracha acharona* since there had been no food so the singing never stopped—and the crowd continued dancing with “*Hoshia es Amecha*” long after.”

In the following days, 770 was a remarkable place to be. At all times, there were farbrengens everywhere. Reb Zushe Wilmowsky (the “Partisan”) took to wishing people ומלאה instead of *l’chaim*.

The Rebbe announced that “from today until Simchas Torah, there should be constant farbrengens of simcha.” Specifically, “tonight, tomorrow morning, tomorrow night, two days from now in the morning,” and so on.

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

The next era of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* began as a surprise.

On the first night of Sukkos 5741, after *maariv* had drawn to an end and the Rebbe had wished the crowd the customary ‘*Gut Yom Yov*,’ something astonishing happened. Instead of walking down from the *bima* and leaving shul, the Rebbe suddenly began saying a *sicha*!

The crowd, taken off guard by the sudden development, immediately began pushing and heaving to get closer, and for several moments the commotion made it difficult to hear; but it quickly subsided

The Rebbe began the short, five minute *sicha* by saying that although we are in *galus* we must still celebrate *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, since every person has a spiritual *Beis Hamikdash* in his heart, and now is the time to have “a *simcha gedola biyoser*” (immense joy). The Rebbe

concluded: “From this we should arrive at the great *simcha* of the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, and we will thank the *Aibersheter*, with ‘*Shehecheynu vekiyemanu vehigeanu lizman hazeh!*”

Then the Rebbe began the *niggun* “*Ata Vechartanu*,” encouraging the singing all the way out of shul, and the elated dancing and singing continued throughout the night in 770.

The following evening, the Rebbe again said a *sicha* after *maariv*, and once again, heaving and shoving immediately commenced. This time, he paused until it subsided. During the *sicha*, which lasted twenty minutes, the Rebbe emphasized that tonight, after fulfilling the mitzvos of Sukkos during the day, the joy must be even stronger than the night before. “Although one surely celebrated *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* on the first night of Sukkos, one must add to the *simcha*, *niggunim*, and dancing, *biyoser se’is u’viyoser oz*. This is a *hora’a* for every Yid!”⁸ (Later

that night, the Rebbe also mentioned the *ushpizin* of Sukkos, which would become a hallmark of these *sichos* in the years to come.)

At the *sicha*’s conclusion, the Rebbe began the *niggun* of “*Uforatzta*.” Again, the dancing went on through the night.

The next morning at 8:40 a.m., Mr. Zalmon Jaffe was standing in line to shake the Rebbe’s lulav and esrog when the Rebbe approached. After exchanging Yom Tov greetings, the Rebbe asked him whether he had celebrated *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* the previous night (probably in reference to his relatively early showing).

Reb Zalmon answered in the affirmative.

The Rebbe smiled and said, “But not for long”.

Reb Zalmon admitted that it had indeed been for a short time only.

On the third night of Sukkos, Friday night (it was a three-day Yom Tov), the Rebbe said that the *simcha*



AVRAHAM FRIED, MORDECHAI BEN DAVID, AND THE PIAMENTA BROTHERS ENLIVEN THE CROWD AT THE SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEVA IN CROWN HEIGHTS, 5749.

YOSSI MELAMED via JEM136030

“should break through the limitations of *simcha* that were in the previous nights.” This marked the first time the Rebbe spoke specifically about the *ushpizin* of the evening—Yaakov Avinu and the Alter Rebbe.

This time, the festivities broke out of 770. The crowds danced down Kingston Avenue, setting up shop on in the middle of Montgomery Street. A few individuals diverted the traffic until a police car eventually arrived to take over. (It should be noted that on the following day the Rebbe gave an instruction through *mazkirus* that all police orders must be followed).

On Motzei Shabbos, the fourth night—the first weeknight—the Rebbe said a lengthy *sicha*, stating that tonight, being the first night that would be celebrated in the *Beis Hamikdash* (since they would not dance with instruments on Yom Tov or Shabbos), called for a new level of joy.

A few musicians set up their instruments on a lawn on the corner of Montgomery and Kingston and they played throughout the night.

This continued for the rest of the week. Each night the Rebbe called for an increase in *simcha*—both because one must constantly increase in holiness, and because every night has a unique superiority over the previous nights. The Chassidim danced and sung and danced and sung. Night felt like day, and much like their forefathers in the *Beis Hamikdash*, people were up for days on end. It felt like one long cycle: *sicha*, dancing, *bentching* the Rebbe’s lulav and esrog; then repeat.

It must have been a bewildering contrast for some. For an extended amount of time, you’re absolutely stationary, in uber-focussing mode, listening intently to the Rebbe’s words. Then you stumble out into rambunctious dancing and singing, running around until your feet are

The Rebbe asked him whether he had celebrated Simchas Beis Hashoeva the previous night; Reb Zalmon answered in the affirmative. The Rebbe smiled and said, “But not for long...”

numb. But that is exactly the point, the Rebbe later explained. Dancing shouldn’t be a hollow exercise, joy with no meaning or context. In order to truly feel the happiness, you must first understand its inner meaning. This is why, in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the *chassidim* and *anshei maase* would each *say* a different proclamation (see above); and it is also why, in days bygone, Chassidei Chabad would generally celebrate *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* with a *farbrengen*, where speaking would lead to dancing (unlike Chassidei “*Chagas*” who focus only on the dancing). Therefore, before going out to dance, it is necessary to comprehend the intellectual significance of the joy.

But talking alone is not enough, nor is feeling alone. Even for a Chabad Chossid, the main thing is to actually get out there and dance. True understanding means that you have digested the concept, that it became one with you, that it permeated every aspect of your being, and this is expressed when you dance.⁹

Mr. Zalmon Jaffe describes the festivities he found on Montgomery street on Sunday at around midnight:

“There was now a six piece (man) band with Ellie Lipsker and other friends in attendance. They were installed upon an open truck. It was really lively. Not only was the band itself making a terrific noise, but the sound was amplified by microphones and loudspeakers. Extra lighting had also been fixed.

“About fifteen hundred men and boys were dancing and singing, and about seven hundred women and girls—and quite a few babies—were milling around too. All the windows and the doors of the premises round about were wide open. Crowds of people were at each window and doorway—and every outside fire escape was filled to overflowing—very dangerously, I might add—with people who should have known better. We left at 1.30 a.m. I was told that the band played on until 4.30 a.m. It still wasn’t late enough for some of our dancers who continued at it until 5.30 a.m.”¹⁰

The outdoor venue was an integral part of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, as the Rebbe later explained. In the times of the *Beis Hamikdash* the festivities took place in the outside courtyard of the *Mikdash*, the *ezras nashim*. The drawing of water, too, took place far away, at the *Shiloach* brook, which was outside the entire city. This is because the focus of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* is that the joy must permeate the world. Thus, we dance in the street, demonstrating that, in the Rebbe’s words: “Not only does the street not bother or impede the *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, but even more so: a person affects that the street itself dances, until everyone sees that it’s a *chassidshishe* street!”

Upon the Rebbe’s instructions, groups of Chassidim traveled to communities outside of Crown

Heights to farbreng with them and spur their *simcha*.

On Hoshana Rabba, many must have presumed that it would be like every year—a night dedicated to reciting Chumash Devarim and Tehillim; who has time for dancing? But the Rebbe had other plans. Tonight, the Rebbe said, on the final day—the climax, in fact—of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, a short amount of time, 18 or 7 minutes, would have to hold the deepest and greatest joy and emotion. After dancing for a short time in *reshus harabim*, they should continue in the shul and sukkah.

Mr. Jaffe relates: “We obeyed the Rebbe’s instructions and about four thousand of us, men and boys danced and sang...in the shul. We then erupted into Eastern Parkway... We danced on the actual roadway of Eastern Parkway and completely blocked the three northern lanes. The police used their initiative and parked their vehicles in such a position that all traffic was diverted onto the other, the southbound carriageways. The three lanes on that side were then divided into two lanes of cars driving one way and one lane going in the other direction. We danced for eighteen minutes, and then transferred to the Succah—just as the Rebbe had instructed us to do.”

UNCONSCIOUS PROPHECY

From that year on, the Rebbe would say *sichos* every night of Sukkos, encouraging the Chassidim to get out

and dance. He spoke at length about the *ushpizin* of each evening, both the traditional *ushpizin* (Avrohom, Yitzchok, Yaakov, etc.) as well as the *chassidishe ushpizin* (the Baal Shem tov, the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, etc.), elaborating on their life stories and explaining fascinating lessons we can learn from them. The *ushpizin* are especially significant, the Rebbe explained, because *simcha* comes from something new and fresh. At a *sheva brachos*, for example, a new person must attend each time in order for it to be considered a festive event. For *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, this *simcha* is also brought by the new person of the night, the *ponim chadashos*—the *ushpiz*.

After the first year, Reb Yisroel Shemtov began to officially hire a band for every night of the week, building a makeshift stage out of benches and tables schlepped down from 770. Several years later, a few *bochurim* approached him. The Rebbe’s *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* has to be a real, high quality event, they argued. *Gezunterheit*, he answered, as long as you fundraise for it.

And they did. A four thousand dollar affair became a forty thousand dollar extravaganza. Famous singers were hired, full page ads were taken out in the Jewish Press and *Algemeiner*, and a gigantic stage was erected. It became the main attraction of the New York Metropolitan area, as an estimated ten to fifteen thousand people converged on Crown Heights

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to join the celebrations every year. This continued for the following years (although, after a while, Reb Yisroel was left to handle with the enormous bill on his own).

In effect, where in the early years of the *nesius* the Rebbe developed the theme of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* and made it relevant to our lives, in the later years he said that we must go out and do it just as they did in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Just as they danced, we danced; just like their water drawing was held outside Yerushalayim, so our festivities are on the street; just as they chanted, we too listen to and learn *sichos* before the celebrations.

And, the Rebbe said, just as the Yidden in the *Beis Hamikdash* drew *ruach hakodesh* from the atmosphere, we also draw *ruach hakodesh* when



THE SECOND NIGHT OF DANCING FOLLOWING THE REBBE'S CALL, 17 TISHREI 5741.

we dance. This applies to every single person that attends. “There will surely be those that ask: how can you say that young children, and even very young children, who do not understand anything yet, have *ruach hakodesh*? When it comes to physical activities, like eating and drinking, it is understood that although the children have no comprehension at all in how it functions, it works anyway. But in regards to spiritual matters, especially *ruach hakodesh*, how is it possible to say that young children have any connection to such things?”

The answer is simple, the Rebbe explained. It says in the the Torah that Moshe Rabbeinu's face shined with a powerful light, so strong that the Jews were all afraid to approach him. And yet, as is described in the

possuk, he himself wasn't conscious of it. Similarly, a Yid can sometimes merit to see Eliyahu Hanavi without realizing who it is (as is brought in the *reshimos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe).

The same is true here, the Rebbe said. A person can have *ruach hakodesh* without realizing it. Even the youngest of children experiences this revelation during the dancing of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*.¹¹



To this day, thousands upon thousands of people throughout the world gather to fulfill the Rebbe's directive and rejoice on *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* in the streets. It is remarkable to watch, all types of people coming together, uniting to do the one thing everyone is able to do equally: dance.¹² **T**

1. Living Torah program 136, “11 Hours of Torah”.
2. Reshimos Hayoman p. 266
3. Sefer Hasichos 5703 p. 10; Toras Menachem 5712 p. 65
4. Yemei Bereishis p. 19
5. Toras Menachem vol. 10 p. 79
6. Simchas Beis Hashoeva 5712; Likutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 425
7. See Igros Kodesh vol. 28 p. 325
8. Sichos Kodesh 5741 Vol. 1 p. 135-136
9. See Sicha Second night of Sukkos 5746
10. My Encounter with the Rebbe vol. 12
11. Sicha second night of Sukkos 5744
12. It should be noted that the content of this article is only a small sampling of the Rebbe's vast explanations of Simchas Beis Hashoeva. For in-depth insight into this subject, study the many sichos in their original form.