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# Overflow of Blessing

Kos Shel Bracha

MOTZOEI PESACH 5737, YOSSIMELAMED via JEM, 130705

לזכות  
הרה"ג הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער  
וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא  
בנותיהם ברכה ליפשא ועליזה שיחיו  
שוחאט



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In the preparation of this article we were greatly assisted by Rabbis Meir Harlig, Yosef Levertov, Yossi Lew, Hirshel Raskin, Yisroel Noach Vogel, and Shlomo Zarchi. זכות הרבים תלוי בהם.





*Kos shel bracha* is one of those times with the Rebbe that simply defy description. After a full Yom Tov that the Rebbe spent with the Chassidim, this was the finale—when every person had the opportunity to pass by the Rebbe and receive *kos shel bracha* from his hand, while hundreds of Chassidim in bleachers from all sides were watching and singing.

The Rebbe himself was especially *behisgalus* during this time, looking at every person one by one as he encouraged the singing and even danced; there were times when the Rebbe also sang with the crowd. Many people from surrounding communities and states, who weren't able to be in 770 during Yom Tov, came in for *kos shel bracha* in order to see the Rebbe in this special, *yom-tov'dike* mode.

For Chassidim after Gimmel Tammuz, although we cannot experience what Simchas Torah and Yom Tov was like in 770, the videos and photographs of *kos shel bracha* afford us a unique view of the Rebbe—in scenes which were at times even more *freilich* than Simchas Torah itself.

In the following pages, we attempt to give an overview of what *kos shel bracha* was like—how it worked, when it happened, and a bit of what it felt like—though words fail to capture even a fraction of this heavenly experience.



THE REBBE MAKES HAVDALAH ON MOTZOEI YOM TOV FOLLOWING THE FARBRENGEN, PRECEDING KOS SHEI BRACHA.

## When it happened

Every time the Rebbe washed for *hamotzi* in public and *bentched* over a cup of wine, he would distribute from that wine—the *kos shel bracha*, the cup of blessing—to those who were present (as is brought down in the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>1</sup>).

However, at regular farbrengens the Rebbe did not wash for *hamotzi*. The exception to this (aside for certain rare occasions) was the farbrengen held at the end of a Yom Tov, when the Rebbe would wash and continue the *seuda* and farbrengen for hours into the night of Motzoei Yom Tov. This happened several times a year: the second day of Rosh Hashanah, Simchas Torah, Moshiach's *seuda* on Acharon Shel Pesach, and the second day of Shavuot. (Until 5731, there was also a farbrengen and *kos shel bracha* on the second day of Sukkos.)

[If it was a three day Yom Tov (with Shabbos following Yom Tov), the Rebbe would farbreng Friday evening with *hamotzi*, but hold the *kos shel bracha* until the following day. Then he would usually hold two farbrengens on Shabbos: a short one at 1:30 p.m.—the regular Shabbos farbrengen—and another right before *shkia* as a continuation to the Yom Tov farbrengen, after which he would distribute the *kos shel bracha*. However, if Rosh Hashanah was a three day Yom Tov there was only one farbrengen, and *kos shel bracha* would be distributed on Shabbos itself.<sup>2</sup>]



## How it Worked

This is how it usually worked:

The Rebbe entered the farbengen about a half hour before *shkia*. Rabbi Berel Junik, the dedicated *meshamesh bakodesh*, would be ready with a *kvort* full of water, a *shissel*, and a towel. After washing, the Rebbe would put the towel on the armrest of his chair, where it would remain for the rest of the farbrengen.

Throughout these farbrengens, the Rebbe would say *l'chaim* on wine from his silver *becher*, which was filled by the official *sar hamashkim* Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik, the *rosh yeshiva* of the central Tomchei Temimim in 770. After Rabbi Mentlik passed away in 5748, his place was taken by Rabbi Junik.

As per Shulchan Aruch<sup>3</sup>, at the very end of the farbrengen, right before *bentching*, the Rebbe would always drink something. In the early years it was half and half, a type of lemonade/seltzer drink, later it was seltzer, and by the *late mems* it was water; the Rebbe would drink it out of a large glass cup on the farbrengen table prepared for this purpose. The Rebbe said *Shir Hamaalos* and washed *mayim acharonim* from what was left in the cup. Rabbi Mentlik refilled the *kos* and the Rebbe began to lead *bentching*.

“When the Rebbe said ‘*Birshus maranan verabanan virabosai*,’ there was always a pause after the word ‘*Birshus*,’” says Rabbi Yossi Lew. “Every single time; this never changed. Now, in the early years, there were often times that the Rebbe said ‘*Birshus Adoneinu*’ (and then ‘*maranan verabosai*’). In fact, even as late as the 5740s, I remember hearing the Rebbe say ‘*Birshus Adoneinu*.’ And it seems that even when it wasn’t said out loud, it’s possible the Rebbe was thinking it—or saying it very quickly—which was perhaps the reason for the pause.”

After *bentching* came *maariv*. Being that it was after *shkiah*, the wine from *bentching* couldn’t be drunk until later and would therefore be used for *havdallah*. The Rebbe would walk over to the right-hand side of the farbrengen *bima*, where the *shtender* and a temporary “wall” would quickly be set up, (from 5746, the Rebbe would daven *maariv* closer to his farbrengen place).

After *maariv*, the Rebbe would return to the farbrengen table for *havdallah*. He would raise the *becher*—still filled from the wine from *bentching*—and Rabbi Mentlik would refill it over the brim (as he would do every time the Rebbe lifted the *becher*).

The Rebbe would then begin *havdallah* in the iconic tune seared into the minds of all who heard it: “*Hi-nei Kel yeshuasi...*”

“The *niggun* for *havdallah* changed over the years,” says Rabbi Yisroel Noach Vogel. “In the earlier years, the Rebbe said it in a lower note; in later years a higher note which was very *geshmak*. On Motzoei Rosh Hashana 5740, which was an exceptionally *freilech* Yom Tov (see below), the Rebbe’s tune during *havdallah* was very *geshmak*.”



MOTZOEI PESACH 5739, YOSSEI MELAMED via JEM, 12/687



After *havdallah*, the distribution of *kos shel bracha* would begin. The first person to receive was the Rebbe's brother-in-law, Rashag, and then came the people who had sat nearby during the *farbrengen*.

### At All Times

Rashag once missed *kos shel bracha*, and the Rebbe's reaction was very telling as to its significance. In 5730, Rashag's mother passed away during Chol Hamoed Sukkos, so the *aveilus* began on Motzoei Simchas Torah. He left 770 right away to remove his shoes and begin sitting *shiva*. However, during *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe was looking for him.

Later, when the Rebbe visited him for *nichum aveilim*, Rashag explained that he had left early in order to remove his shoes immediately after *maariv*. The Rebbe replied that he could have davened *maariv* after *kos shel bracha*, and given the wine to someone else to drink. In fact, the Rebbe added, leaving early constituted a problem since it was a public display of *aveilus* (which is prohibited on Yom Tov). In the end the Rebbe said that he would give him from some wine that had remained in his room.

Rashag said that he had sent a *bochur* to get *kos shel bracha* on his behalf.

"Which *bochur*?" the Rebbe asked. Rashag motioned to a *bochur* standing there. Addressing the *bochur*, the Rebbe asked, "In what way did you ask?"

"For Rabbi Gurary," the *bochur* said.

Turning back to Rashag, the Rebbe motioned with his hand, "There are many Rabbi Gurarys..."

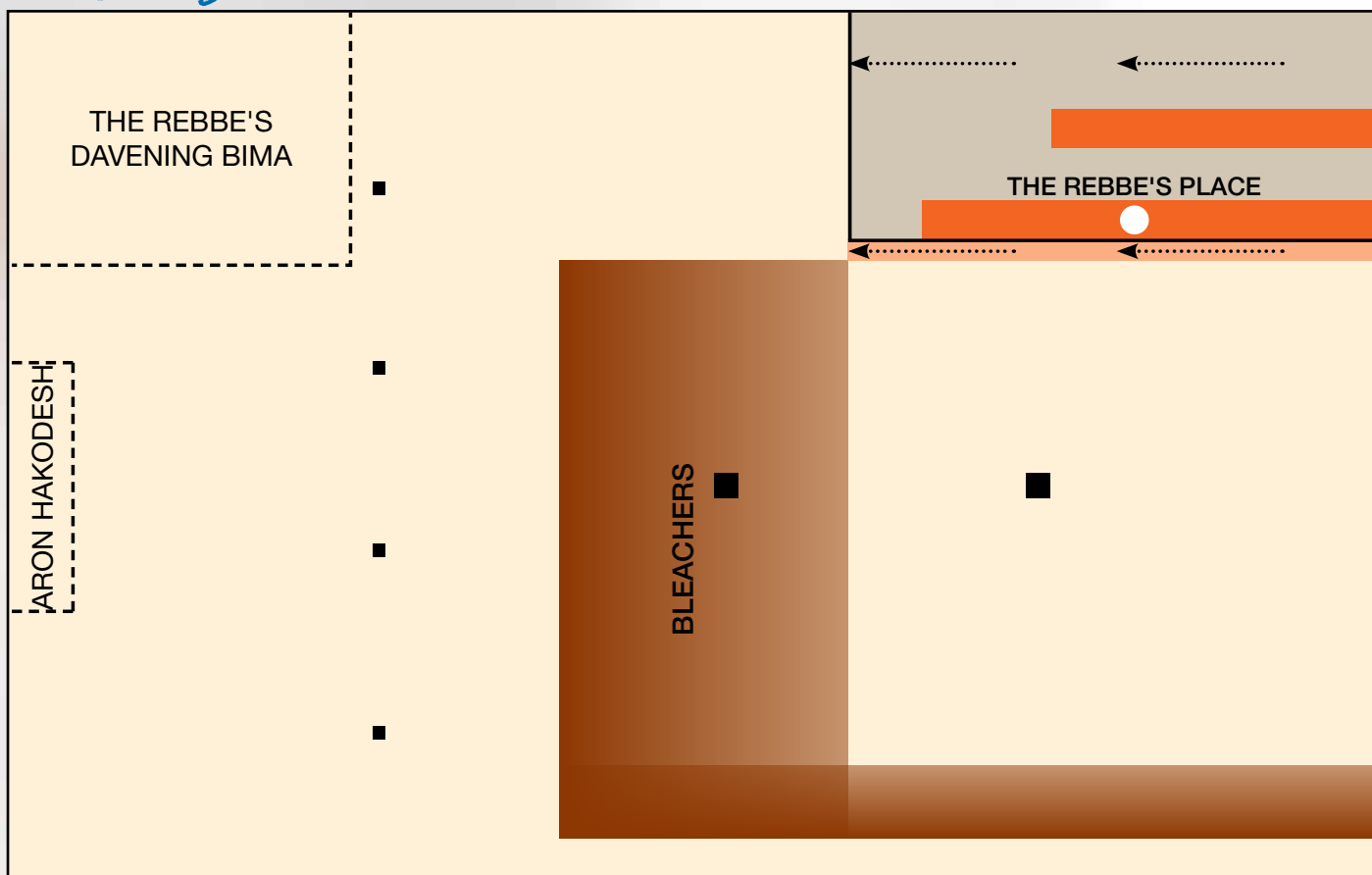
In those first few minutes, as the Rebbe was beginning to distribute *kos shel bracha*, and sometimes during *maariv*, the entire room would undergo a drastic overhaul. All of the benches on one side of the room were removed to make room for people to stand and get around.

Reb Zalmon Jaffe describes the scene: "There was a terrific commotion during *maariv*. Some of the appointed stewards were busying themselves rearranging and pulling away benches and tables in order to make additional space for the anticipated *kos shel bracha* lines to commence immediately following *maariv*. Their efforts made it a hazard to stand still to say the *amidah*. It was a miracle that no one was injured by the overhead progression of tables and benches!"<sup>4</sup>

# Schematic of Kos Shel Bracha

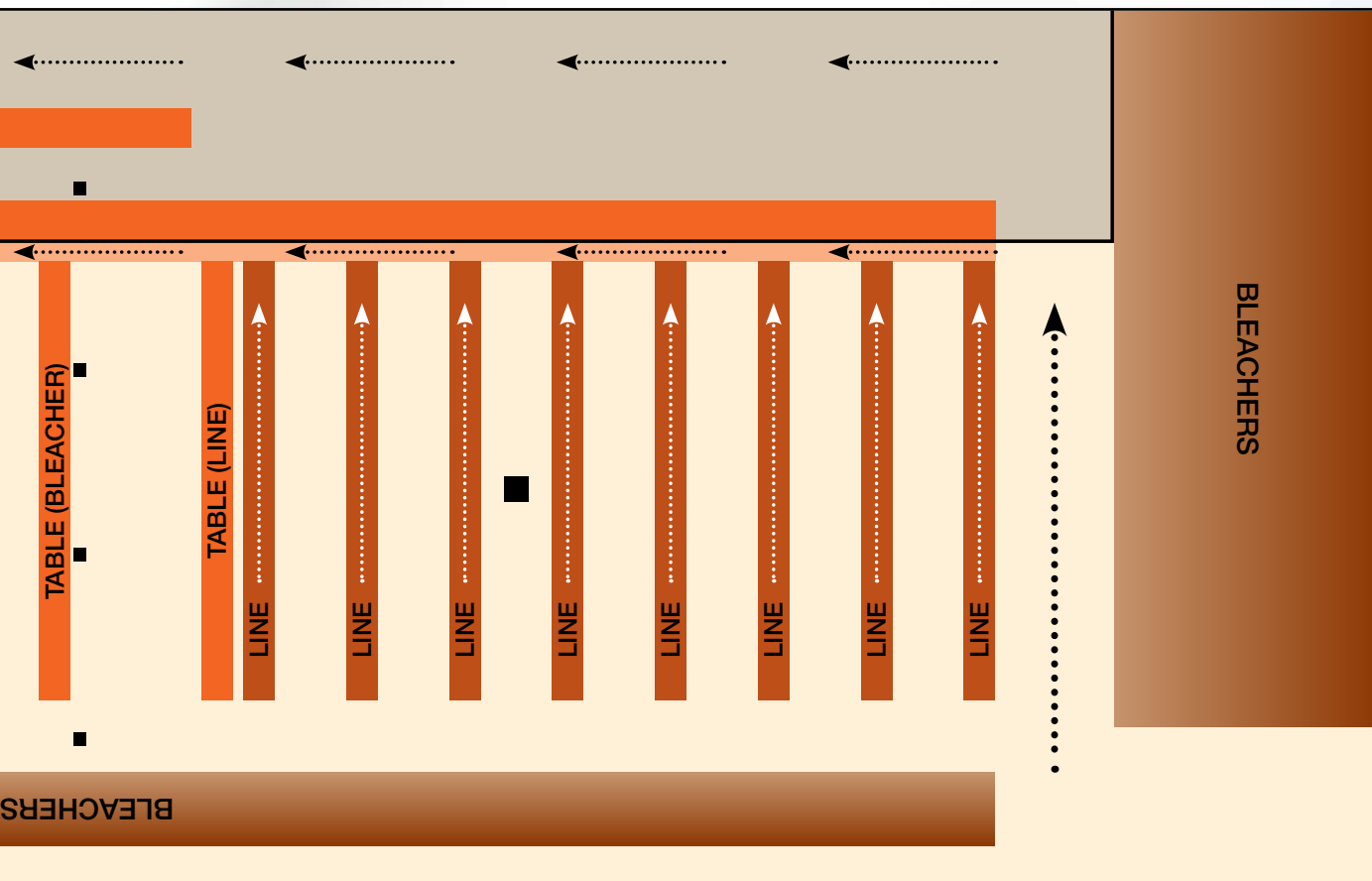
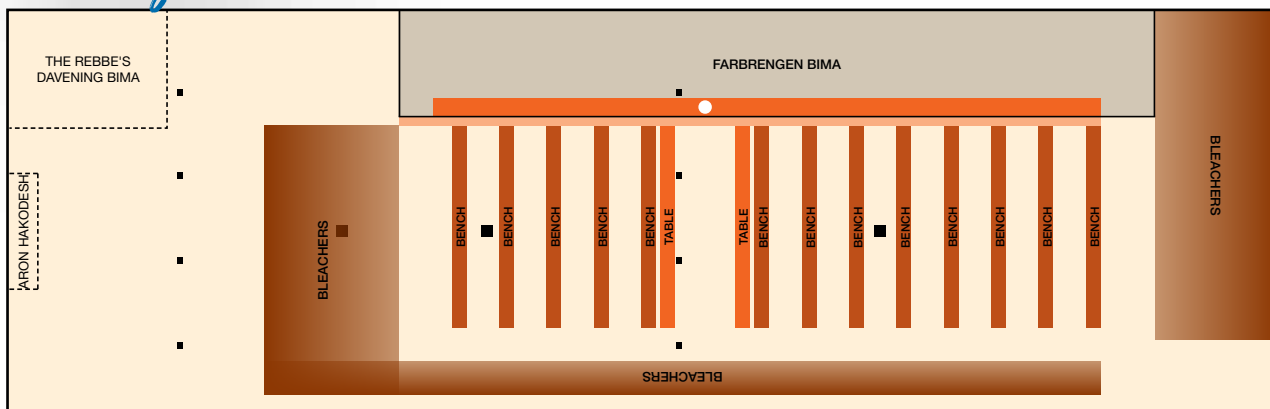
- After *benctching*, the Rebbe davened *maariv* at his *shtender* which had just been brought over.
- The Rebbe recited *havdallah*.
- As the Rebbe began giving out *kos shel bracha*, the benches on the left of 770 were moved out of the way to make room for the crowd.
- Meanwhile, people got up on the bleachers to watch the Rebbe.
- The Rebbe distributed *kos shel bracha* near the east end of the bima (left). The east table (to the left) became a bleacher, and the west table (to the right) was a line. (After 5746, the Rebbe distributed at the *farbrengen* place, near the middle; the left table was taken out and the right table became a bleacher.)
- In order to receive *kos shel bracha*, you would join one of two lines:
- **The back line:** you would go to the rear of 770, where a line went up the stairs and onto the back of the *farbrengen bima*.
- **The front line:** you would join one of several lines on the benches. Under the direction of several volunteers from the *vaad hamesader*, these would feed into one single line on the table alongside the front of the *farbrengen bima*.
- Standing between the tables, the Rebbe would switch between the lines at his discretion.
- After receiving *kos shel bracha*, you would leave the *bima* using the stairs.

## Kos Shel Bracha



*It should be noted that this is only a rough approximation, as the exact setup of 770 often changed over the years.*

# Farbrengen





## Unbounded Joy

As the Rebbe was distributing *kos shel bracha*, the *bochurim* and *yungeleit* standing on all sides—as well as all the people standing in line—would sing lively *niggunim*, intermittently encouraged by the Rebbe. The Rebbe would pour to about five to eight people at a time, after which the *becher* was refilled by Rabbi Mentlik (later, Rabbi Junik). Although the Rebbe was giving out to so many thousands of people, he would always look up and make eye contact with each person as they passed.

When refilling the *becher*, Rabbi Mentlik was careful to do it in a way that the wine being added was nullified to the wine already in the *becher*. Each time he poured wine in, he added less than was originally in the *becher*, and then he would pour in some more. This made the refilling take some time. This time period, as the Rebbe was waiting, was often when he would give the greatest encouragement to the singing.

“Generally, as the Rebbe was giving out *kos shel bracha* with his right hand, he would encourage the singing with his left hand”, Rabbi Hirshel Raskin says. “There were times that he would encourage with both hands—as he was holding the *becher*. Can you imagine what happened with the wine...? In general it was a miracle that any wine ever stayed in the *becher*...

“And then there were those special times when the Rebbe put down the *becher* and encouraged the singing with both hands, dancing in his place with amazing energy. It is impossible to describe the *giluyim* in those moments.”

“Sometimes,” Rabbi Yossi Lew says, “the *bochurim* would go through various *sedarim* of *niggunim*. All the *niggunim* on the Rebbe’s *kapitlach*; all the *niggunim* that the Rebbe taught, etc. Who can forget those times when we were singing ‘*Stav Yapitu*,’ and the Rebbe encouraged the singing at the words ‘*v’ato tishma-a-a-a-a-a....min hashamayim*.’ It was a very special moment.”



THE REBBE MOTIONS FOR CHASSIDIM TO WHISTLE.

MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5749, LEVI FREIDIN *via* JEM, 258140







## The Chazzan and his Children

Then there was Chazzen Tzvi Hersh (Grischa) Tsatskis. He was an emigre from Tatarstan, where he grew up under the Communist regime, and he and his family was educated by the underground Lubavitch network. Following over a decade of trying to emigrate without success, a Lubavitcher shliach asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for them, and less than a year later, they received the green light. As soon as they arrived in America, Tzvi Hersh and his family came to the Rebbe to express their gratitude. After the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe began giving out *kos shel bracha*.

He related: “I was sitting in the back, debating with myself whether I should join them. I wanted to, but not being a Chabad Chossid, I wasn’t sure if I should, until I saw the line coming to an end. And then, on impulse, I got up and stood at the back of the line. Before long, I found myself in front of the Rebbe holding my cup. The Rebbe gave me a big smile, poured wine into my cup, and I said *l’chaim*. I started to walk away, but the Rebbe called me back. He motioned for me to come forward.

“So I came back, and he gave me an even bigger smile and poured more wine into my cup. I said *l’chaim* and then he spoke to me in Russian: “Don’t have any more doubts.” I was so shaken that I almost fainted. Then he said, “Sing!” And I started to sing the Pesach song, ‘Who knows one!’ Except I sang it in the Russian: ‘*Ech Ti Zimlak...*’”<sup>5</sup>

From then on, Chazzen Tsatskis was a permanent fixture at *kos shel bracha* leading the singing, often with his trademark song “*Ech Ti Zimlak*.” When he was present, the Rebbe’s encouragement was stronger than ever.

He would often come with his children. Once, when he came only with his son but not his daughter, the Rebbe immediately asked for her: “Where is she? Where is Tanya?” His son immediately ran to call his wife, and Tanya—a little girl at the time—was immediately brought over. When the Rebbe saw her, he waved to her, and from then on, Mr. Tsatskis would always bring her with him.

Once, during *kos shel bracha* of Motzoei Simchas Torah 5747, Mr. Tsatskis was singing “*Ech Ti Zimlak*” as usual, and the Rebbe was encouraging the song with one hand as he was distributing the *kos shel bracha* with the other. His daughter Tanya was singing along into the microphone, and after a few minutes, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Groner to tell her, gently, that she was too old to be singing in front of men.

When Rabbi Groner returned, the Rebbe looked back at her, and it seemed that he was concerned that she was upset. So in the middle of the song, during the countdown—

*Shest knizek mishni....[six sidrei Mishna]*

*Piat knieznik tur.... [five books of the Torah]*

*Tchitiri nashich matushki...[four are the mothers]—*

the Rebbe put down his *becher*, turned to face the girl, and started clapping with amazing enthusiasm in her direction. The scene was indescribable. The Chassidim—who hardly knew the refrain of the song, let alone the countdown—joined along, singing *aiya-aiya, aiya-aiya, aiya-aiya*, faster and faster, long after the countdown was over.



## Interactions

Throughout the evening, the Rebbe was often very *freilach*, smiling to people as they passed and telling them a few words. The following are some selections from Motzoei Rosh Hashana 5743:

❖ Rabbi Groner's ten-year-old son asked the photographer Mr. Levi Freidin for his camera. The Rebbe turned and asked, "Since when is the child involved in such things?" Addressing the child, the Rebbe said: "Your *inyan* is to learn Chassidus; your *zeides* didn't know of such things."

❖ When "Charlie Buttons" passed, he held out three cups, explaining that one is for him, the second for his *yetzer hara* which had been transformed to good, and the third for the *yetzer tov* itself. The Rebbe smiled and filled them all with wine.

❖ The chairman of a *kibbutz* came by. The Rebbe took the glass cup which he usually used for soda (or water), emptied it, and filled it with wine. Giving it to the man, the Rebbe said in an Israeli accent, "*Hatzlacha rabba*."

❖ Someone passed with his child who was wearing a hat with the emblem of Tzivos hashem. The Rebbe pointed at the emblem and told the father to look at it.

❖ Someone asked for wine on behalf of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, adding that he had done a fine job (in the war of '*Shalom Hagali*'). The Rebbe replied that he must stand strong.

❖ At the end of the night, when the Rebbe's chair was brought for *bracha acharona*, there was some pushing. Mr. Levi Freidin started shouting "Don't push the chair! Where are you pushing!" The Rebbe commented, "They want it to be *achishena*..."

Over the years, there were open miracles that occurred during *kos shel bracha*. In one of his journals, Mr. Zalman Jaffe relates one such story: "Rabbi Yehuda Paldy, an Israeli journalist and activist on behalf of the "Who is a Jew?" campaign, had broken his leg twenty years ago and, after three operations, it was decided that nothing further could be done for him. He could only walk leaning heavily on a big stick. He had been coming to see the Rebbe for three years now. On this past motzoei Shavuos, whilst he was receiving his wine during *kos shel brocha*, bent double over his stick, the Rebbe asked him why he still walks with a stick. He should now leave it behind. Rabbi Paldy smiled and the Rebbe said it was not a joke. "You don't need a stick."

"So, he now walks fine without a stick. The men and boys who saw him previously walking laboriously with a stick still cannot believe it. This is Rabbi Paldy's own story, and he is keeping the stick as 'Exhibit A' for a constant reminder."



MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5742, YOSSI MELAMED via JEM, 125812



MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5751, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 175856



MOTZOEI ROSH HASHANA 5737, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 203805



MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5737, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 205149

## From all over

“As the night would wear on,” Rabbi Raskin says, “people would come from all over to receive *kos shel bracha*: Boro Park, Williamsburg, Monsey, Flatbush. Half of the room was filled with *shtreimelach*, *spodeks*, hats, regular yarmulkes. In fact, most of the line came from non-Lubavitchers; it was unbelievable!”

In addition to the wine that the Rebbe distributed to every person passing by, he would also give bottles to *shluchim*, *askanim*, and occasionally other individuals. On Motzoei Simchas Torah and Motzoei Shavuot these were small bottles of *mashke*, and on Motzoei Acharon Shel Pesach, bottles of wine. (Bottles were not given out on Motzoei Rosh Hashanah.)

“*Kos shel bracha* was such a *geshmake* time,” Rabbi Vogel says. “It was a time to just be with the Rebbe. It’s not like a *farbrengen* where you’re concentrating on the *sichos*, or even other times; you were simply together with the Rebbe, watching, singing...”

“The *giluyim* of *kos shel bracha* were something special,” says Rabbi Raskin. “There were the *giluyim* of *sichos*, dollars, *yechidusen*, *farbrengens*, rallies; but the *giluyim* of *kos shel bracha* were different. There were some people who didn’t necessarily push so much at the *farbrengens*, but they were always there for *kos shel bracha*. That’s what we lived with! We lived from one *kos shel bracha* to the next.”

## Is there anyone who didn’t get yet?

At the end of the night, as both lines would finally come to an end, the chair was brought for the Rebbe to sit for *bracha acharona*.

After the *bracha acharona*, the Rebbe would occasionally say a few words to the crowd.

On Motzoei Simchas Torah 5748 it was an announcement about *hakhel*: “*Hatzlacha rabba umuflaga* to every single person in *hakhel*...Every single person could, must, and surely *will* be successful in the activities of *hakhel* in their place, neighborhood, and overall surroundings...”

Before leaving, the Rebbe would often start a *niggun*—usually “*Ki Besimcha*”—and then walk upstairs to his room.

“Here we saw one of the most unbelievable things about the Rebbe,” says Rabbi Lew. “The Rebbe had spoken at the *farbrengen* for hours and hours; then he stood for hours and hours, pouring wine for each person. If you ever tried it, you’d see that the amount of exertion that such a thing takes is extraordinary. All the while, he was waving his hands, encouraging the *niggunim* etc. etc.

“Yet—and this happened *every single time*—before he went upstairs, the Rebbe would ask: ‘*S’duh nuch eimitzer vos darf bakumen? Is there anyone who didn’t get yet?*’”

“One could think, the five hours weren’t enough?! And there was *always* someone who didn’t get yet, someone who just couldn’t make it in the previous five hours of the Rebbe giving out.

“Most people would be relieved that such an exhausting task was finally over. But the Rebbe wanted to give more and more. Even after all of his giving, the Rebbe is always looking to give more.”





THE REBBE SITS DOWN FOLLOWING KOS SHEL  
BRACHA TO RECITE THE BRACHA ACHARONA.  
MOTZOEI ROSH HASHANA 5748, YOSSEI MELAMED *via* JEM, 132155





MOTZOEI SHAVUOS 5737, YOSSEI MELAMED via JEM, 114918





# Special Moments

Throughout the years, there were unique moments that stand out in the minds of all those who witnessed them. A small selection is included below.

## Piannismio! Motzoei Simchas Torah 5729

Reb Shmuel Katan came from Eretz Yisrael to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe for the first time. During *kos shel bracha* on Motzoei Simchas Torah, the *bochurim* somehow found out that he had a violin with him, and on their initiative he ran to the house where he was staying to bring it.

He related: “I stood in line to receive *kos shel bracha*, which I received from the Rebbe’s hand. Overcome with emotion, I said, “Rebbe, I would like permission to play the violin.” As the Rebbe continued to distribute *kos shel bracha*, he looked at me for a second, with a penetrating look, and said: “*Tov me’od! Bibakasha!* Very good! Please do!”

“The Rebbe continued to distribute *kos shel bracha* while I took out my violin. I was told—with the Rebbe’s consent, obviously—to play the *niggun* “*Essen Est Zich*.” Towards the end of the *niggun*, the Rebbe gestured with his shoulders, as if to say, ‘Something isn’t right.’ When I finished the *niggun*, the Rebbe said there were two nuances [*kvetches*] that I had played which weren’t part of the song.

Once I corrected it and reached the last stanza of the *niggun*, which is wordless, the Rebbe asked me to repeat it several times: “*Mach noch amol, noch amul—uber pianissimo*,” the Rebbe said. “Play it over and over again, but pianissimo.” In Italian, this means ‘softly,’ very softly.

“So I played it as the Rebbe requested, every time softer and softer. The Rebbe turned to me and said, “Make the last note a *tekia gedola!*” as he gestured widely with his right arm.

“At the end of *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe stood up and started walking out, and everyone started singing ‘*Ki Besimcha*.’ The Rebbe also sang. Then he looked at me, as if to say, “Nu, play along.” So I started playing along with everyone. As I’m playing, the Rebbe instructed me for the third time, saying, “Make it a crescendo!” I was familiar with the concept but I hadn’t heard exactly what the Rebbe had said. When the Rebbe saw me looking at him, unsure of what to do, he said, “The opposite of pianissimo.”<sup>6</sup>



## A year of *kos shel bracha*: 5738

Due to the events of Shemini Atzeres, the Rebbe did not distribute *kos shel bracha* on Motzoei Simchas Torah. Throughout the year that followed—starting with Zos Chanukah and then during many Motzoei Shabbos farbrengens—the Rebbe would wash and then distributed *kos shel bracha*.

This was unique to that year, rarely happening at regular farbrengens before that, and certainly not afterwards.

At the final farbrengen of the year, on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe said that he will now give out *kos shel bracha* once again, this time in order to officially make up for missing it on Motzoei Simchas Torah.<sup>7</sup>



## Ubeyom Simchaschem: Motzoei Rosh Hashana 5740

“It already began during Rosh Hashanah,” Rabbi Hirshel Raskin relates. “The Rebbe announced ‘*Gut Shabbos! Gut Yom Tov!*’ three times—very uncharacteristic for a solemn day like Rosh Hashanah—and then ‘*Lishana tova tikasev viseichasem!*’ Then the Rebbe began ‘*Vesamachta!*’ The *olam* was shocked, *arais fun di keilim*. We saw that something special was happening. Then, on Motzoei Rosh Hashanah, throughout *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe was very *freilich*, setting down the *becher* several times and encouraging many of the *niggunim* with both hands, and even singing out loud together with the crowd.”

“*Kos shel bracha* wasn’t very long, but the Rebbe encouraged almost every single *niggun*,” Rabbi Yisroel Noach Vogel recalls. “During the *niggun* of ‘*Didan Notzach!*’—before there were words—the Rebbe made so *freilich* by that *niggun*, the crowd was going wild, *mamesh* screaming the *niggun!*”

Towards the end of *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe told the *chazzan*, Reb Moshe Teleshevsky, to put the words of the *possuk* ‘*Ubeyom Simchaschem*’ to the *niggun* that was being sung at the moment. (Rosh Hashanah fell out on Shabbos that year, and the *maamar*’s *dibbur hamaschil* was ‘*Ubeyom*

*simchaschem eilu haShabassos.*’) The Rebbe added that in a *piyut*, the first words are repeated after each stanza, as in the *piyut* ‘*Ulay Yerachem.*’ (When he didn’t understand what the Rebbe was saying, the Rebbe told him, “Aren’t you a composer?!”) )

Reb Moshe tried figuring it out and teaching it to the crowd, but it didn’t go over very well. Finally, after fifteen or twenty minutes, the Rebbe said: “A *Simchas Torah* *niggun* *vet mistame gein besser*—A *Simchas Torah niggun* will probably work better.” They began singing “*Zol shoin zain di geula*” without the words.

“The Rebbe set down his *becher* and started passionately encouraging the singing with both hands,” Rabbi Vogel says. “First the Rebbe began clapping very strongly, then he started motioning with both hands, then it was back to clapping. It was truly unbelievable.”

“There was amazing *simcha*,” Rabbi Hirshel Raskin says. “The Rebbe danced; to say it was like *Simchas Torah* is an understatement! It was *Simchas Torah sheb’Simchas Torah*—on Motzoei Rosh Hashanah!”

When the photographer Levi Freidin returned to Eretz Yisrael with the video, the Chassidim were overjoyed to see that the Rebbe had returned to his full strength following Shemini Atzeres 5738.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM, 19803

THE REBBE INSTRUCTS CHAZZAN MOSHE TELESHEVSKY TO SING A NIGGUN TO THE WORDS ‘UBYOM SIMCHASCHEM’.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM, 199864

### Tzivos Hashem Choir: Motzoei Simchas Torah 5742

A large children's choir, dressed in their Tzivos Hashem uniforms, came to *kos shel bracha* and sang behind the Rebbe. Throughout the evening, the Rebbe encouraged the singing every once in a while. "At the very end," Rabbi Yossi Lew says, "the Rebbe began starting *niggunim*: 'Nyet Nyet Nikavo' and 'We Want Moshiach Now.' The Rebbe was almost conducting them, using both hands to encourage the singing."

### Ana Avda: Motzoei Rosh Hashanah 5743

Reb Zalman Teibel came by for *kos shel bracha*. Many years earlier, in 5729, Reb Zalman had introduced the *niggun* "Ana Avda" to Chassidim. While sitting at the Rebbe's *seudah* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment on the first day of Shavuot, the Rebbe asked Reb Zalman to sing a *niggun*, and after his unsuccessful attempts at remaining silent, he acquiesced and sang "Ana Avda." During the *seudah* that night, and then again on the following day, the Rebbe asked him to sing it again. At the farbrengen on the second day of Shavuot, the Rebbe asked that the Chassidim adopt this *niggun* and learn it, and it became a *niggun* which the Rebbe showed much *chavivus* to and started on his own many times.

Now, over a decade later, Reb Zalman was an elderly man. He went by *kos shel bracha* together with Rabbi Chaikel Chanin, who asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that Reb Zalman should be *be'simcha*. In response, the Rebbe began singing the *niggun* "Ana-Ana Avda" together with Reb Zalman. At first Chassidim tried joining in the song as they normally would, but the Rebbe kept on singing, so the crowd slowly quieted down and listened—a very

rare sight in the 5740s. As he sang, the Rebbe motioned passionately in the direction of Reb Zalman, who was singing together with him, and then announced: "It was just Rosh Hashanah. Now we're going to Tzom Gedalya, the Asseres Yemei Teshuva, Yom Kippur, Z'man Simchaseinu, Simchas Torah. May we be *zoche* to sing this [*niggun*] with Moshiach as an '*ana avda*,'<sup>8</sup> together with you!"<sup>9</sup>

### Non-Yom Tov Kos Shel Bracha: Throughout the Years

There were rare occasions (in addition) that the Rebbe washed and gave out *kos shel bracha* during a farbrengen that wasn't on Yom Tov: Yud Tes Kislev 5712; Purim 5712; Purim 5713; Lag B'omer 5735; farbrengen Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5737 for the Released Time children; Shabbos Bereishis 5750, and others. There were also the Rebbe's three visits to camp, in 5716, 5717, and 5720; and, most prominently, the famous surprise farbrengen on Shabbos parshas Nasso 5751.<sup>10</sup> T



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KOS SHEL BRACHA FOLLOWING THE SURPRISE FARBRENGEN OF SHABBOS PARSHAS NASO 5751.

1. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim Siman 190 seif 5.
2. This too varied throughout the years; in earlier years the Rebbe distributed *kos shel bracha* on Rosh Hashanah itself; in later years the Rebbe held two farbrengens on Shabbos Shuva.
3. Orach Chayim Siman 179 Seif 8
4. My Encounter with the Rebbe, Shavuot 5734, "The mezuzah campaign."
5. Here's My Story "They are Observant".
6. Living Torah Disc 154, program 614 "Musical Interlude"
7. Sichos Kodesh 5738 vol. 3 p. 443; see also Sichas Zos Chanukah 5738, *ibid.* Vol. 1 p. 355
8. "באופן ד'אנא עבדא'"
9. See Derher issue 43 (Nissan 5776), Behind the Picture: "Ana Avda" Reb Zalman Teibel's Niggun
10. See Derher issue 32 (Sivan 5775) p. 7

# Faces of Kos Shel Brocha

MOTZOEI PESACH 5737, YOSSIE MELAMED via JEM 129755



MORDECHAI BARON via JEM 146086



YOSSIE MELAMED via JEM 130885



**Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik**, *rosh yeshiva* of 770, the *sar hamashkim*. Over the years, many commented on the amazing fact that the person pouring wine for the Rebbe—seemingly a job befitting a more simple individual—was in fact a brilliant and respected *rosh yeshiva*.

**Rabbi Meir Harlig**. A constant presence at *kos shel bracha* and other *chalukos*. He would play a role in keeping the line moving forward.

**Rabbi Leibel Bistritzky**. He would help direct the line on the right side of 770.

MORDECHAI BARON via JEM 147483



MORDECHAI BARON via JEM 145831



YOSSIE MELAMED via JEM 129905



**Rabbi Berel Junik (R)**, *meshamesh bakodesh* and later *sar hamashkim*.

**Rabbi Berel Lipskier (L)**. He would stand on the floor of 770, assisting Rabbi Mentlik and refilling his pitcher of wine, while also helping direct the flow of the line.

**Chazzen Tzvi Hersh Tsatskis**. He often led the singing.

**Reb Meir Abehsera**. When the Rebbe would give the signal to whistle—by putting two fingers near his mouth and nodding strongly—it was usually to Reb Meir. From his perch on the front end of the Rebbe's *farbrengen bima*, he would whistle very loudly with all his energy.