

לזכות
הת' משה פינחס שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות יום
ב' דראש השנה ה'תש"פ

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת ברכה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
טעלדאן



Sukkos *by* *the* REBBE

One of the Shalosh Regalim—when the entire Jewish nation would gather in the Beis Hamikdash, *liros uliheiraos* (to see and be seen)—was the Yom Tov of Sukkos. Set right after Yom Kippur, when the *Aibershter* promises Yidden a good and sweet year, the joy was boundless.

Over the many years of the Rebbe's *neisus*, the style of Sukkos by the Rebbe changed dramatically, from the Rebbe's *farbrengen* in the Sukkah to the nightly *sichos* and *simchas beis hashoevah*. Nonetheless, the common theme throughout all the years, and throughout all the days of Sukkos, was the boundless joy that the Rebbe exuded and shared with all the Chassidim.

In previous issues, we sat down for roundtable discussions with various Chassidim who shared their recollections of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Simchas Torah with the Rebbe. This year, we again present a roundtable discussion with three Chassidim—of different ages—this time relating their memories from the special Yom Tov of Sukkos.

Our thanks to Rabbi Gavriel Shapiro of Crown Heights, Rabbi Yoske Sassonko of Miami and Rabbi Levi Jacobson of Toronto for sharing their memories for the benefit of the readership. זכות הרבים תלוי בהם.



TISHREI 5744, MOREDECHAI BARON VIA JEN 146085

Take Off Your Coat!

Rabbi Shapiro: The first Tishrei I spent near the Rebbe was in 5721*, when I was a young child living in Cleveland, Ohio. I have had the merit to be present every single Tishrei since.

My earliest Sukkos memory is of the Rebbe *bentching* on the lulav.

Children wouldn't *bentch* on the Rebbe's *daled minim*, but I remember standing on the steps in front of 770 and watching as the Rebbe sat in his sukkah and people walked in, *bentched* on the lulav and esrog, and backed out. The Rebbe Maharash's *maamar* "*Hemshech Vekacha*" (in its original handwritten print) was open on the table in front of the Rebbe. It was a special sight.

Another interesting memory is the Rebbe on the streets of Crown Heights. In those years, Crown Heights was home to a wide range of Jewish communities,¹ and on Yom Tov afternoon, Eastern Parkway was full of Jews strolling on the parkway. I vividly recall the image of the Rebbe walking past hundreds of people on his way to and from 770, all wishing the Rebbe a "*Gut Yom Tov*."

In those early years, the Rebbe also held a farbrengen in the Sukkah on Chol Hamoed. Those farbrengens would normally last about two and a half hours, and the Rebbe always delivered a *sicha*

on *nigleh*. The last time the Rebbe farbrenged on Chol Hamoed was in 5724*.²

However, the farbrengens in the sukkah on the second day of Yom Tov and Shabbos Chol Hamoed were held through 5730*. I remember one farbrengen in particular, on Shabbos Chol Hamoed 5727*. It was pouring rain, but when the Rebbe entered he instructed everyone to take off their coats, and he took off his own coat as well. When Reb Shea Pinson wore a coat to *kos shel bracha*,³ the Rebbe told him to take it off too.

Rabbi Sossonko: Although I was only nine-years-old in 5727*, I remember that farbrengen distinctly. That Tishrei a small contingency of the new Russian immigrants were present; my father Reb Asher Sasonkin, Reb Mendel Futerfas, Reb Berke Chein and perhaps a few others. In the years 5726*-5734*, thousands of Jewish families were granted permission to leave the Soviet Union. Until then it was almost impossible to leave, yet with a *bracha* from the Rebbe and tremendous *nissim*, my family received permission to leave earlier in 5724*. Getting out of Russia was unheard of at the time! The story is an article in itself.

My father traveled to the Rebbe from Eretz Yisroel right away for Tishrei 5725*, and for Tishrei 5727* he brought me along. I was the only Russian



CHASSIDIM WAIT IN LINE BY THE REBBE'S SUKKAH FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHAKE THE REBBE'S LULAV AND ESROG, CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS 5723.

RABBI YOSEF GOLDSTEIN

child present. The Rebbe showered us with amazing *kiruvim*, and he asked that I stand near him at all the farbrengens that Tishrei. In the sukkah as well, I stood very close to the Rebbe, right behind Rabbi Hodakov.

I didn't understand the *sichos*, but I did notice the rain pouring off the Rebbe's hat, especially during the *maamar*. Often, the Rebbe would begin a *maamar* in a slow and deliberate manner, and as it would progress, he would speak more intensely and increasingly move his hands and head. At this farbrengen, I remember watching how the water poured off his hat every time the Rebbe moved his head in a different direction, and was slowly soaking through the *kapote*.

Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky was watching from behind, and he placed a towel over the Rebbe's shoulders, doing so very gently hoping the Rebbe wouldn't notice.

A Confirmation For Your Work

Rabbi Shapiro: Shortly before my first Tishrei, the *shalash* was transformed into a permanent structure.⁴ Therefore, the Rebbe's sukkah—which until then had been in the corner of the *shalash*—was moved to the front yard of 770, and the public sukkah was moved to the courtyard on the other

side. It was a simpler sukkah in those days, and was built each year by Reb Shlomo Cunin (a *bochur* at the time) and his brother *ybchl"ch* Reb Pinyeh a"h.

The *sechach* on the Rebbe's sukkah and the public sukkah was always evergreen, which is a significant expense. I recall that they once asked the Rebbe if they could buy bamboo poles for the public sukkah, and the Rebbe refused, because it would take away from another Jew's *parnassa*.

Rabbi Jacobson: I had the merit to take part in building the Rebbe's sukkah in the later years. One year, as I stood on the ladder working on the sukkah, I suddenly realized that all the other *bochurim* had disappeared. When I got off the ladder, I noticed them gathered behind the sukkah. "You got a confirmation for your work," they exclaimed. My *chaverim* explained that the Rebbe had opened his blinds and had been watching me for several minutes. They said that this was actually a yearly occurrence that at some point during the building of the sukkah, the Rebbe would look out of the window and observe the building (although this was the only time I saw it).

In later years, a second sukkah was built for the Rebbe on the driveway, which the Rebbe could reach privately from the hallway in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. In 5751*, that Sukkah was moved into



ERECTING THE REBBE'S SUKKAH IN THE FRONT COURTYARD OF 770, 11 TISHREI 5737.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 20/4/36

5/5/1990

TISHREI 5780
A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

Rabbi Groner's office, where a retractable roof was installed.

The Rebbe's Daled Minim

Rabbi Shapiro: Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson had the *chazaka* to provide the Rebbe with the *daled minim*. After he passed away, his son-in-law, Rabbi Mordechai Altein, took over. In addition, Rabbi Leibel Bistritzky would bring lulavim, Reb Shalom Hecht would bring esrogim, and visitors from Kfar Chabad would present the Rebbe with esrogim from the Kfar Chabad orchards.

On Erev Sukkos, the Rebbe would have various dignitaries and representatives enter his room, and they would each receive a set of *daled minim* from the Rebbe. I recall that the *mazkirim* would receive two hadassim each. Rabbi Nissan Mindel received a lulav and esrog as well, along with others such as Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky and Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik. Others present would receive a single hadas from the Rebbe.⁵

Rabbi Jacobson: Reb Dovid Raskin was entrusted by the Rebbe each year with the job of preparing the lulav for the Rebbetzin. In later years, he did so for the Rebbe as well. He would always do it “*b’eimah ubiyirah*,” dressed in his *kapote* and gartel, fully invested in every detail and infinitely care. Some *bochurim* and children, myself included, would crowd around in the sukkah to watch.

Sukkos Farbrengens

Rabbi Shapiro: In the years that the Rebbe would farbreng in the sukkah,⁶ there would be a farbrengen before the end of the first days of Yom Tov. The Rebbe would wash for bread, lead the bentching, and after the farbrengen, the Rebbe would distribute *kos shel bracha*.

The Rebbe's seat at these farbrengens was on the far end of the sukkah, with his back towards Union Street. The *bochurim* would stand along the sides, while the older people would sit in the middle. If you had a *makom kavua* in 770, you attempted to sit in a similar location in the sukkah as well.

The sukkah wasn't very large, and as the crowd grew, the pushing became unbearable. During the farbrengen in 5729*, the Rebbe asked that the *olam* stop pushing, and that otherwise he would end the farbrengen early.

Rabbi Sossonko: The pushing was extremely intense, and children like us weren't able to make it inside. During the Rebbe's last farbrengen in the



REB DOVID RASKIN PREPARES THE LULAV FOR THE REBBETZIN AS REB SHMUEL DOVID RAICHIK LOOKS ON, EREV SUKKOS 5737.

Sukkah, on Shabbos Chol Hamoed 5730*, there were tables and benches collapsing all over. Rabbi Marlow's foot got trapped under one of the heavy tables that collapsed, and the bones shattered from the pressure. The next year before Sukkos, the Rebbe informed Rabbi Hodakov that he would no longer hold farbrengens in the sukkah.

Rabbi Shapiro: When word got out that the Rebbe would no longer farbreng on Sukkos, the Vaad Hamesader—and others—asked the Rebbe several times to reconsider, but the Rebbe responded very sharply that it had become an issue of *pikuach nefesh*.

Then, on Yom Tov, the Rebbe surprised us with an announcement that a farbrengen would be held, but that it would be inside 770 with no food or *l'chaim* (“אויף טרוקען”). That Sukkos (5731*) coincided with the United Nations General Assembly, and it



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seemed that the farbrengen was associated with the Rebbe's *ruchniusdike* attempts to impact it.⁷

This farbrengen was an exception to the rule, and the next year, in 5732*, we understood that the Rebbe would not be farbrenging at all. Many new Russian immigrants had arrived during that Tishrei, and the Rebbe showered them with attention. They submitted a request for a Sukkos farbrengen, and the Rebbe said that instead, he would deliver a *maamar* in the morning of Shabbos Chol Hamoed in 770.

I remember that *maamar* clearly. It felt like a "Matan Torah Maamar" on Shavuot. The shul at 770 was packed when the Rebbe entered at 8:00 a.m. The room was set up like a regular farbrengen, and the Rebbe seated himself at his place, delivered the *maamar* (*Ulikachtem Lachem*), and left immediately afterwards.

Rabbi Sossonko: Over the next 10 years, there were no *sichos* or farbrengens on Sukkos aside for

a few exceptional occasions. Instead, it seemed, the Rebbe chose to farbreng on Yud-Gimmel Tishrei, which he had previously done only on Shabbos. The first such farbrengen took place in 5733*.

The Yom Kippur War

Rabbi Sossonko: A most memorable Sukkos was in 5734*, right after the Yom Kippur War broke out. The Rebbe held a farbrengen on Yud-Gimmel Tishrei and spoke amazing words, saying that "*nibah velo yadah ma nibah*," how he had, with his words, "unknowingly" preempted the war with his campaign during the summer for Jewish children, *mipi olelim veyonkim*. The entire farbrengen was connected with the war, even the "Torah" elements of the *sichos*.

From that farbrengen onward, the Rebbe was in a state of constant *simcha*, and demanded a similar joy from Chassidim. If I recall correctly, the Rebbe said



RABBI AARON GOLDSTEIN VIA JEM 204760

THE REBBE FARBRENGS IN THE SUKKAH DURING CHOK HAMOED SUKKOS CIRCA 5716.



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DANCING IN FRONT OF 770 IN THE SPIRIT OF SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEVA, 19 TISHREI 5744.

we should farbreng “*yomam valayla*, day and night,” throughout Sukkos.

The Rebbe also held another two farbrengens in the shul without food or l’chaim (“אויף טרוקען”); one on the second night of Sukkos, and other on Shabbos Chol Hamoed.

We were perplexed; the war was going terribly in Eretz Yisroel, and we were in constant trepidation. On Chol Hamoed, a group of Chassidim led by Reb Zushe Wilmowski approached the Rebbe with a *pan* for the Jews of Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe said that he was in a state of *simcha*, and the *pan* wasn’t appropriate for the mood, so to speak; but since Chassidim were asking for a *bracha*, he would obviously respond.

On Shemini Atzeres, a very special event took place during *hakafos*. After the regular *pesukim* were read for the fourth *hakafa*, the Rebbe suddenly began singing the *pesukim* printed in small—



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THE REBBE LEAVES 770 FOR THE SUKKAH SUKKOS MORNING TO SHAKE LULAV AND ESROG, 20 TISHREI 5742.

“*Mitzvas Hashem barah...*”—to the tune of “*Hoaderes V’Haemuna*” (the tune commonly sung in shuls).

Initially, we were totally lost, but I remember that a few quick *bochurim*, Reb Leibel Altein and others, immediately understood what the Rebbe wanted, and they began responding to each stanza, “*L’chai olamim...*” After three or four lines, everyone joined in, and the entire room roared in response to the Rebbe’s calls. The Rebbe had given that *hakafa* to anyone that had been or was in the army, and this was sung with great emotion; we felt as if the Rebbe was winning the war with *simcha* at that very moment.

The next day, when the members of the Israeli consulate came to *hakafos*, they were surprised to see the joy and celebration during such a trying time, but we managed to explain to them that the Rebbe was spiritually winning the war with *simcha*.



That night the Rebbe also taught the *niggun* of “*Hoàderes V’Haemuna*” to the French national anthem.

Sukkos Stories

Rabbi Sossonko: Sukkos 5736* was a very rainy holiday, from the beginning to the end. The sukkah was filled with mud, and everything was a big mess. A *bochur*⁸ wrote to the Rebbe that it seemed to be a fulfillment of the Gemara⁹ that compares rain in the sukkah to a king who pushes away his servant, but the Rebbe rejected that explanation. The Rebbe said that we should tell the people on *mivtzoim* and *tahalucha* that Hashem wanted to make our farbrengens more comfortable, so he gave rain so that we are halachically permitted to eat outside of the sukkah.¹⁰ When we received the *hora’ah*, we took buses to other neighborhoods and shared the Rebbe’s message with those Jews.

It was very difficult to farbreng that Sukkos. I recall Reb Mendel Futerfas holding a farbrengen in the small *zal* without food or drink, and whenever he wanted to say *l’chaim*, he would lean out of the window into the sukkah.

Simchas Beis Hashoevah

Rabbi Shapiro: Until 5741*, Sukkos was a relatively quiet Yom Tov, especially throughout the 5730s*, when the Rebbe didn’t farbreng at all. Chassidim would travel on Chol Hamoed to farbreng in various communities, a custom which started in the 5710s*, and some farbrengens with Chassidim took place in the evenings, but nothing official would happen.

Rabbi Sossonko: In general, on the first night of Yom Tov, Crown Heights was silent. I recall Reb Avrohom Mayorer being one of the only Chassidim who would farbreng that night.

The second night of Yom Tov was when the farbrengens began. Every sukkah was full of Chassidim; one very popular farbrengen was in the Dubrawsky sukkah, where my father Reb Asher Sossonko and Reb Mendel Futerfas would farbreng. On Chol Hamoed, there were many farbrengens as well, although on a smaller scale.

Then, in 5741—*Shmas Hakhel*—everything changed.¹¹

After Maariv on the first night of Sukkos, the Rebbe turned around on his *bima*, wished the crowd “Gut Yom Tov,” and suddenly began saying a *sicha*!

The crowd rushed forward to hear, and a *balagan* ensued. The Rebbe spoke for a few minutes, and then began singing a *niggun* and left 770 while encouraging the singing. It was very hard to hear the *sicha*, especially since nobody was prepared. Afterwards, I was told that the Rebbe had spoken about the joy of *simchas beis hashoevah*, how it could be celebrated in *galus* even on the first night, and that he used very strong terms about the importance of *simcha* during Yom Tov.¹²

Needless to say, when we heard the Rebbe’s instructions, we all broke out into a joyous dance, but as the minutes passed, people slowly broke away to begin their Yom Tov meals. I noticed one guest from Eretz Yisroel, Reb Moshe Nisselevitch, dancing with extra vigor. His son explained to me that his father felt that this was more than a regular *hora’ah*, and a great deal of *simcha* was needed. He planned to dance until people returned from their *seudas Yom Tov* to replace him.

* 5736-1975, 5741-1980, 5730S-1970S, 5710S-1950S, 5741-1980



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The Rebbe had asked for *simcha*, but for how long can a person dance? We didn't expect it to go longer than a half hour or an hour.

After the meal in my parent's home, I went to Reb Avrohom Mayorer's sukkah to farbreng as usual. On the way, I stopped off in 770, and I saw that Reb Moshe was still dancing with another 30 or 40 people. I joined the circle for some time, and continued on to Reb Avraham.

The next morning, I heard that Reb Moshe and the dancers had decided to go outdoors to "conquer" the streets as well, and had circled the *shechuna* at two o'clock in the morning. They even passed the Rebbe's home! There was a rumor that the Rebbe had smiled when he heard about it.

That night, the Rebbe again said a *sicha* about *simchas beis hashoevah*. We began to realize that something special was happening. More and more people began participating in the dancing on the street, and on Motzei Shabbos Chol Hamoed (it was a three day Yom Tov) an orchestra joined as well. During the *sicha* on the third night, the Rebbe himself spoke about the dancing in the streets, explaining that we were turning the *reshus harabim* into a *reshus hayachid l'yechido shel olam...*¹³

Until that year, *simchas beis hashoevah* was celebrated through farbrengens. That year, we began dancing much more, but nonetheless, farbrengens were still held over Yom Tov. However, in *sicha* after *sicha*, that year and in following years, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of dancing and dancing in the streets, as opposed to conducting farbrengens. From then, farbrengens became pretty much obsolete; the *mitzvas hayom* was dancing.

Rabbi Jacobson: From that year onward, Sukkos was a time of no sleep. Just as in the *Beis Hamikdash*, when *lo tu'amu taam shina*. After the Rebbe's *sicha*, we would dance every night at the *simchas beis hashoevah* until the wee hours of the morning, and then we would have only about two hours until the line for the Rebbe's lulav began. Then was *mitvtzaim*, and then the cycle would start over again.

The night would begin with a *sicha*. These were normally very long, sometimes even reaching close to two hours. They were always very *geshmak*; generally, the Rebbe would speak about the importance of *simcha* at *simchas beis hashoevah*, and about the *ushpiz*—including the *Chassidisher ushpiz*—of the day.¹⁴ The Rebbe would also often connect it to the *shiurim* in Chitas and Rambam,

and various other topics. Often, on Friday night, the Rebbe spoke a Rashi *sicha* too.

The Rebbe would usually begin with a *shrutemdiker* call of "Gut Yom Tov," to which the crowd would respond with a resounding "Gut Yom Tov" of its own. Often the Rebbe would announce "Gut Yom Tov" three times. Then the Rebbe would start the *niggun* of "*Vesamachta*," which would go on for several minutes with the Rebbe encouraging the singing, and only then would he proceed with the *sicha*. It was the Rebbe's "Gut Yom Tov" and *niggun* that set the tone for the "*zman simchaseinu*" on a daily basis.

A wonderful memory that I have is from the second night of Sukkos 5750*. It had rained mightily the night before, and the dancing was not the way it could have been. During the *sicha*, the Rebbe said that a *shmuah* had reached him that the dancing hadn't been with full enthusiasm. He hoped it wasn't true, the Rebbe said, but even if it was, we could be *mashlim* it that night, and we should see to it that "*Vu nur s'iz doh a gass, zol men zehn az di gass zol mit-tantzen*—wherever there is a street, the street should dance along."

The *sicha* was a short one; "*Veiniker geredt un mer getuhn*—less talk and more action," the Rebbe said. As usual the Rebbe began with "*Vesamachta*," and in the middle of the *sicha*, the Rebbe began singing his father's *niggun* for several minutes with unbelievable *simcha*. At the *sicha's* conclusion, the Rebbe said that when Moshiach comes, the whole world will see that "*Atah Vechartanu...*" and began singing the *niggun*.

That night, the dancing went on all night with a lot of *lebedikeit*. We sang "*Veshimcha hagadol...*" for hours on end, and hundreds of people participated. It was a very special night.

On Yom Tov when there was no microphone, it was important to come very early to get a place near the Rebbe's *bima*, and the pushing would be very severe. In 5752*, the Rebbe's *shtender* was moved to his farbrengen place in the center of 770. This way the Rebbe would be in the center of the room and it would be much easier for a larger crowd to hear. A special platform was built by the Vaad Hamesader for the Rebbe to walk from his davening *bima* to the place of the *sicha*.

In addition to the dancing and farbrengens that would break out immediately, after the *sicha*, 770 would split into groups of *chazzara*, especially on Yom Tov. In later years, there were special *chazzaras* held in English, Hebrew and Yiddish, so everyone

* 5750-1989, 5752-1991



REB MEIR HARLIG BRINGS THE LULAV AND ESROG TO THE REBBE BEFORE HALLEL, 21 TISHREI 5751.

present would be able to understand, and many hundreds of people would participate.

On the first night of Yom Tov, the Rebbe would also go to 770's large sukkah (along with Reb Moshe Yeruslavsky, the official *machnis orach*) and say a special *sicha* to the *orchim*. A small *bima* would be set up for the Rebbe, and he would speak for a few minutes.

During, before and after all the *sichos* and *tefillas*, the Rebbe pushed the *simcha* further and further. The Rebbe encouraged the singing going in and out of davening, and during each *sicha* explained how that night's *simcha* needed to be greater than all the previous nights', and how each person was obligated to take part.

Each year, the *simchas beis hashoevah* grew to much larger proportions.

The Rebbe expected each and every Chossid to take part in the dancing. One anecdote that illustrates this: One year, in the middle of a Yom Tov night, the Rebbe went out of his room to the sukkah. On his return, he requested that Rabbi Groner be called to take care of a certain issue. There was a *bochur* near the Rebbe's room (after 5748*, each night of Shabbos and Yom Tov, certain *bochurim* would make rotations to remain near the Rebbe's

room) and the Rebbe asked him to go find Rabbi Groner, saying that "*Mistame iz er baim tantzen—he is probably at the dancing.*"

It was in the wee hours of the morning, and yet the Rebbe expected that Rabbi Groner—who was no youngster by then—would be nowhere else, but at the dancing!

When we heard the story, we also understood that we couldn't suffice with attending the *simchas beis hashoevah* for a short few minutes. The Rebbe wanted every Chossid to be fully involved.

Shaking the Rebbe's Lulav

Rabbi Shapiro: From the earliest years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, Chassidim *bentched* each day on the Rebbe's *daled minim*. As I mentioned earlier, when I was a child, the Rebbe would sit each day and watch as each individual would enter the sukkah and make the *bracha*.

In 5725*, the Rebbe gave a *maaneh* in which he expressed his displeasure in spending so much time standing there. From then on, Rabbi Meir Harlig took over.

Each morning, the Rebbe would arrive in 770 at 8:00 or 8:15, come out to his sukkah with the lulav and esrog and spend 10 or 15 minutes there. Then,



HOSHANA RABAH 5750. LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM165872

he would open the door, hand the *daled minim* to Reb Meir Harlig, and everyone would have the opportunity to *bentch* on it in the large sukkah. Before the Rebbe reached Hallel, Reb Meir would bring the *daled minim* down to the shul for the Rebbe, and after the Rebbe returned to his room, Reb Meir would come back out with it for anyone who hadn't had the opportunity to *bentch* earlier.

Rabbi Sossonko: In the early years, everyone would wake up at a regular time, go to *mikveh*, and get on line to *bentch* on the Rebbe's *daled minim*. However, as the crowd grew, the line began to stretch longer and longer, and people began coming very early, from five in the morning, to reserve places in the line. Then, a new *seder* began. Numbered tickets were distributed in the morning, and you would only get into line shortly before your number arrived.

The line would be held in a special corner of the main sukkah that was constructed for this purpose.

Rabbi Shapiro: There were two instances when the *pitum* fell off the esrog making it *possul*. On one occasion, the Rebbe began using the Rebbetzin's esrog instead, but he didn't give it for Chassidim to *bentch* (he explained that it didn't belong to him). Instead, we *bentched* on the sets that the Rebbe had

given the prominent Chassidim, such as Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik. The other time, the Rebbe replaced it with an esrog from his room.

Rabbi Jacobson: In 5752*, I was up the entire first night of Sukkos, and as the morning began, a *bochur* came in and reported that the Rebbe was standing and watching the *olam bentch* lulav. When the Rebbe had come out of his sukkah with the lulav at 8:15, he turned right and started walking towards the *bentching* place at the back of the large sukkah. People thought the Rebbe would leave the lulav there and go back, but the Rebbe remained until the line was finished at 3:15 pm!

The prospect that the Rebbe would watch you recite the *bracha* was quite frightening, and I know of at least one *bochur* who stood next to the sukkah the entire time but couldn't bear to enter. Others stumbled over their words. It was a very unique feeling, seeing the Rebbe pay such close attention to each and every passing *bochur* and *yungerman*. The Rebbe answered "*Baruch hu uvaruch shemo*" and "*Amen*" to all the *brachos* and watched closely as each of the thousands of people shook. Normally, we would watch the Rebbe, but here the tables were turned and the Rebbe was watching us, from



TEHILLIM, NIGHT OF HOSHANA RABBAH 5740.

an extremely short distance away. It was an awe inspiring experience.

As time passed, a chair was brought for the Rebbe. Rabbi Groner also informed the Rebbe of the time, but the Rebbe stood there until after 3:00 p.m., watching closely as every person recited the *bracha*.

Shacharis and Mincha took place back-to-back that day. It was a special davening, and I remember the Rebbe encouraging the singing very greatly by “*Halelu es Hashem*” during Hallel for a significant amount of time.¹⁵

Hoshaana Rabba

Rabbi Sossonko: Hoshaana Rabba is normally a busy time; there was Chumash and Tehillim to recite, a Yom Tov to prepare, a *sicha* and *simchas beis hashoevah*. I recall on several occasions how the Rebbe noted in the *sicha* of the night that a Jew has the power to accomplish everything. The *simchas beis hashoevah* on Hoshaana Rabba was obviously much shorter than usual. In 5741*, the Rebbe said to dance for 18 minutes and then to return to the shul to recite Devarim.

Rabbi Jacobson: The *sichos* on Hoshaana Rabba were especially unique and longer than the other nights. The Rebbe would often speak at length about the *geula* and that day’s *ushpiz*—Dovid Hamelech. Those *sichos*, in my mind, were the most expressive of the Rebbe’s heartfelt cry for the *geula*. One example was the heart-wrenching *sicha* of Hoshaana Rabba 5744*, when the Rebbe cried profusely when talking about Moshiach.

Rabbi Shapiro: Tehillim on Hoshaana Rabba would be at one o’clock. There were several years that the Rebbe also said a short *sicha* afterwards.


Rabbi Sossonko: Shacharis would begin at 10:00, and would take a very long time, partially due to the *chazzan*, Reb Yankel Katz, stretching it out. When it was time for Hoshaanos, the Rebbe would stand at a *shtender* on the floor, so that he wouldn’t need to get on and off the *bima* seven times. The Rebbe would circle the *bima* with the *chazzan* and a few others and the rest of the crowd did their Hoshaanos afterwards.

Rabbi Jacobson: After Hoshaanos, the Rebbe would turn around and watch the entire crowd do Hoshaanos themselves. It was always a special

sight as the Rebbe stood and gazed at the *olam*. On Hoshaana Rabba, the Rebbe would do so for a very long time.

After davening on Hoshaana Rabba, the Rebbe's lulav would be brought out for women and children to *bentch*. Mrs. Maryashe Garelik would be in charge of that line. No matter how busy they were on Erev Yom Tov, the whole world came to a stop and they waited patiently in line for their turn. As a child, I remember it being a major highlight of Sukkos as this was my only opportunity to shake the Rebbe's lulav.

Rabbi Shapiro: The Rebbe would also give out *lekach* on Hoshaana Rabba for whomever had not received earlier, and in the later years, women would receive *lekach* as well.

Rabbi Jacobson: After Hoshaana Rabba davening, the shul would be emptied, and they would begin setting up for *hakafos*. Then we would prepare for Simchas Torah, the climax of it all!¹⁶ 

1. Read about the story of Crown Heights in *A Chassidisher Derher*, Cheshvan 5777.

2. See *A Chassidisher Derher*, Teves 5779 pg 43.

3. That year was a three day Yom Tov, and the farbrengen on

the second day of Yom Tov went late into Friday night. Due to halachic concerns about *kiddush*, the Rebbe would not eat or drink past *shkiah* on such occasions, so *kos shel bracha* was distributed after the Shabbos farbrengen the following day.

4. Read more about 770's expansions in *A Chassidisher Derher*, Iyar 5775.

5. See "Daled Minim," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei 5779.

6. For a full description of the Rebbe's farbrengens in the Sukkah, see "The Streets Will Dance," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei 5777.

7. The full story of this farbrengen and the continuation on Simchas Torah is printed in a *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei 5779. "Transforming the Nations."

8. Rabbi Binyomin Zilberstrom. For the story in detail, see *My Encounter*, Living Torah D158 P632.

9. Sukkah 29a.

10. The full *maaneh* is printed in *Lekutei Sichos* vol. 14 pg. 433.

11. For another description of these events and more, see "The Streets Will Dance," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei 5777.

12. See *Sichos Kodesh* 5741 vol. 1 pg. 128

13. *Ibid* pg. 195.

14. For a sampling of those *sichos*, see "From Generation to Generation," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei 5774.

15. For a full description of this day, see *A Chassidisher Derher*, Issue 6.

16. See our round table discussion about Simchas Torah by the Rebbe, "Uniting, Uplifting, Transcending," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei 5778.



RABBI SY HODAKOV

HOSHANOS, HOSHANA RABAH 5724.



CHOL HAMOEED SUKKOS CIRCA 5723, PINNY LEW