



SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEIVA

KEDUSHA AND SIMCHA

Every Sukkos, the *Beis HaMikdash* was all afire with the festivities that celebrated the *mitzva* of *nisuch hamayim*, when water was poured on the *mizbei'ach*. In fact *Chazal* noted that "Whoever never witnessed *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva* has never in his life seen true joy."

After the first *Yom-Tov* was over, the *Azara*, the courtyard in the *Beis HaMikdash*, would be prepared for the *simcha*. Balconies were built to accommodate all the women who came to watch, so that they should stand separate from the men. Golden candlesticks were set up, fifty *amos* high, with four gold bowls atop them. Four ladders led to the top of each candlestick, and four young *kohanim* mounted them, holding large jugs of oil which they poured into the golden bowls. Thick wicks were made from worn-out clothing of the *kohanim*, and when the candlesticks were lit, their brilliant light lit up every courtyard in *Yerushalayim*.

The *levi'im*, standing on the fifteen steps overlooking the gathering, played various musical instruments. The greatest *chachomim* and other men of stature danced joyfully, while all the other *Yidden* watched. Some of the *chachomim* would bear burning torches in their hands while singing *Tehillim* and other praises, and others heightened the *simcha* by performing incredible feats. *Chazal* relate that *Rabbon Shimon ben Gamliel* would juggle eight lit torches, which never touched each other. He would also bend down and kiss the ground and then draw himself up again, a feat which no one else could do.

Two *kohanim*, trumpets in hand, were stationed at the Upper Gate of the *Beis HaMikdash*. As the roosters crowed to announce the first light of dawn, they sounded their trumpets, and as they descended the steps on their way to draw the water, they blew additional rounds of blasts. When they reached the Eastern Gate, they would turn to face the *Beis HaMikdash* and exclaim: "We belong to *HaShem* and our eyes are turned to *HaShem*."

The water was drawn with a golden container from the spring of *Shiloach*, near *Yerushalayim*. When the *kohanim* returned from there to the gate of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the trumpets would be sounded again. A *kohein* would ascend the

ramp of the *mizbei'ach*, and on its left side he would pour the water into a silver bowl which led down to the depths under the *Beis HaMikdash*.

In his later years, *Rabi Yehoshua ben Chanania* recalled: "When we used to rejoice at the *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*, our eyes saw no proper sleep throughout the entire *Sukkos*. In the morning, the *korban tomid* was offered, followed by *Shacharis*, and then the *korban mussaf*. From there we would go to the *beis hamedrash* to study. Then we would go and eat. *Mincha* was followed by the afternoon *tomid* – and then the *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva* began once more."

(סוכה מ"ח ע"א, נ"א ע"א ואילך)

This event was called *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*, which means "the celebration of the place of drawing." The plain meaning of that name refers, of course, to the drawing of water. In addition, *Chazal* point out another meaning: from that holy celebration, the people present drew *ruach hakodesh*, for where there is joy, the *Shechina* rests. Indeed, it was from his participation in *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva* that the *navi Yonah* was granted the prophetic inspiration of the *Shechina*.

(ירושלמי סוכה פ"ה ה"א)

Today we cannot physically participate in the *Nisuch HaMayim* in the *Beis HaMikdash*. The *Alter Rebbe* therefore teaches that each of us must therefore perform its equivalent in our own *avoda*. What is the spiritual equivalent of the pouring of water? – Quenching the burning love that a *Yid* has for *HaShem*, and from this, arriving at a state of inner *bittul*. This must be retained (as hinted at in the word *atzeres*) and continued, through the study of *Torah*.

(לקוטי תורה סוכות עח סע"א)

REJOICING IN OUR TIMES

The *Rebbe* taught that although the original rejoicing would take place in the *Beis HaMikdash* on the occasion of *Nisuch HaMayim*, today, too, we can have this *avoda* – just as today we can carry out the *avoda* of the *korbanos*, by *davening*. The *Rebbe* noted that today we even have certain advantages, since with us the rejoicing begins from the first night, and even ordinary people can actively participate.

The *Rebbe* added that in order for the *simcha*

to be real, we must first understand it. On the other hand, this understanding and feeling must find expression in physical dancing.

(מעייני הישועה ע' 43)

One night on *Chol HaMoeid*, the *talmidim* of the *Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva* in *Dokshitz* arrived at the *sukkah* of *Reb Yehoshua Lein* to *farbreng* and rejoice in *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*. The *chossid* told them, "What kind of *simcha* can one possibly have without studying beforehand the *maamar* that begins *U'She'avtem* (which explains the reason for the joy)?"

The *bochurim* went off to bring a few copies of *Likkutei Torah* from their homes and then studied that *maamar* for over an hour. Only then did they rejoice, dancing till late at night.

(לקוטי סיפורים פערלאוו ע' ש"ח)

After *Maariv* on the second night of *Sukkos*, the *Tzemach Tzedek* would *farbreng* in honor of *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*. He would explain profound concepts in *Chassidus*, and then *niggunim* were sung and the *chassidim* would dance. The *Tzemach Tzedek* himself would dance so vigorously that even the *yungeleit* were unable to keep up with his pace. After the *farbreng* he would study a *halacha* in *Choshen Mishpot* in depth, so that the sweat of the *mitzva* (*zeiah shel mitzva*) should dry, thus ensuring that the energy previously generated by *kedusha* should not be diverted to *kelipa* (*yenikas chitzonim*).

(סד"ש תשי"ג ע' 10)

From the year תשמ"א (1980), the *Rebbe* delivered a *sicha* after *Maariv* on each night of *Sukkos*, explaining the distinctive significance of that particular day and of the *Ushpizin* who come to visit. That year some *chassidim* celebrated *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva* by dancing, first in the *Shul* and later in the streets. The *Rebbe* encouraged their practice and explained the advantage of bringing the *kedusha* outside of the *Shul* and into the streets.

(מעייני הישועה ע' 7, שיח"ק תשמ"א ה"א ע' 195)

CONSIDER THIS!

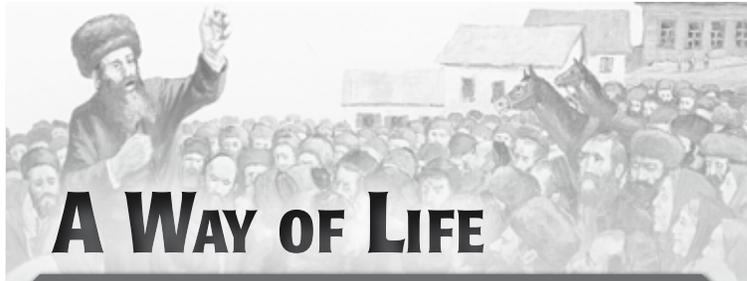
- Why did only the great *chachomim* dance at the original *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*? And what changed today?
- Can one rejoice without understanding what he is joyous about?

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A WAY OF LIFE

SIMCHAS YOM-TOV

How is one to celebrate and rejoice during Yom Tov (“V’Somachto B’Chagecho”)?

- The Torah commands us to rejoice throughout all of Yom Tov and Chol Hamoeid.
- In the times of the *Beis-HaMikdash*, every man was obligated to eat meat from a *korbon shlamim*. Today the *simcha* is attained by drinking a *revi’is* of wine each day of Yom Tov and Chol Hamoeid. Even today a mitzvah is fulfilled by eating meat and other delicacies.
- A man should also rejoice his family by buying them each something that will make them happy.
- While the food enhances the joy, one should not celebrate merely by eating and drinking; for this is not joy, but vain frivolity. The joy should be one of serving Hashem, which is only possible in a holy atmosphere. Each Beis Din would see to it that the level of *kedusha* is maintained by everyone.
- Furthermore, one should help other unfortunate people rejoice as well and invite them to partake in his meals. Then the joy is “*simcha shel mitzvah*” and not self indulgence.
- Above all the above, on *Sukkos* there is an added level of *simcha* (as we say in davening “*zman simchaseinu*”), which is expressed by singing, clapping and dancing.

מקורות: שו"ע ר' א"ח ס"י תקכ"ט ס"ו-ז, י"ג; שיחת ליל א' דסוכות תשמ"א; ס' המנהגים ע' 67.

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CURRENT EVENTS

כ"ב תשרי

REB AHARON STRASHELER

Reb Aharon Halevi of Strasheleh was one of the greatest *talmidim* of the Alter Rebbe. He was chosen by the Alter Rebbe to be the Mittlerer Rebbe's *chavrusa*, and they became extremely close friends. After the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe, some *chassidim* of the Alter Rebbe chose Reb Aharon as their Rebbe, and he wrote published numerous *seforim* of Chassidus. Reb Aharon was imprisoned at the same time as the Mittlerer Rebbe. He passed away on Shemini Atzeres תקפ"ט (1828) in Strasheleh and is buried there.



Reb Aharon's manner of *avodas Hashem* was a full of enthusiasm and left an indelible impression on all those who saw it. The chossid Reb Abba Chashniker related of his visit to Reb Aharon at the age of twelve: "The speech of Rabbi Aharon was fiery, and when he mentioned the name of the Alter Rebbe he would stand up and then fall silent, immersed in thought." Reb Abba's eyes would shine brightly as he spoke of these things. He once said: "At a later time, I was privileged to see the Mittlerer Rebbe and to become a follower of the Tzemach Tzeddek, but till the end of my days, I shall never forget what I saw and heard while with the chossid Reb Aharon whenever the words of the Alter Rebbe were on his lips."

(ימי חב"ד)

Once a chossid inquired of Reb Peretz Chein whether he should go to Lubavitch or to Strasheleh, and Reb Peretz directed him to Strasheleh. When Reb Peretz arrived in Lubavitch, the Mittlerer Rebbe expressed his displeasure. Reb Peretz excused himself, saying that he had seen the chossid was full of emotion and therefore had sent him to Reb Aharon (who served Hashem with tremendous enthusiasm).

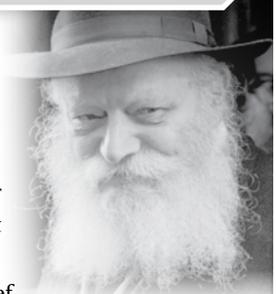
(מועשי אבותי בס' מגדל עז אות פה)

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

"HOW COULD YOU PASS A DAY WITHOUT LEARNING?!"

The famous *mekubal* of *Yerushalaim*, Harav Bentziyon Moshe Yair Vainshtok, took ill and was hospitalized in New York. His son, Reb Yosef Menachem, was at his side, assisting in all that he can.



"One day, in the year 5718," relates Reb Yosef Menachem, "The Rebbe, from whom I used to ask advice regarding my father's treatment, asked me what I am learning. I explained to the Rebbe that I am at my father's side from early morning until late at night, and so I simply don't have the time.

"The Rebbe would not let me go and said to me, 'Surely, you can learn three to four hours a day. How could you let a day go by without learning?! You could learn *Gemorah*, *Mishnayos* or *chassidus*, but I don't want to hear any excuses!'

"The Rebbe spoke with me for half an hour and did not relent, as if I was a *Lubavitcher chossid*, until I promised to learn every day. It was then that I realized how much Torah learning means to the Rebbe."

לע"נ ר' אפרים ארי' ב"ר אליעזר ע"ה ומרת דבורה בת ר' משה ע"ה