

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 3

ערב סוכות תשע"ה

Simchas Beis HaShoeiva

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

Kedusha and Simcha

Every Sukkos, the *Beis HaMikdash* was aflame with festivities that celebrated the mitzva of *nisuch hamayim*, the pouring of water 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 the women and children who came to watch, enabling them to stand separate from the men. Golden candlesticks, fifty *amos* high, were set up with four gold bowls atop each of them. 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 the worn-out clothing of the *kohanim*, and when the candlesticks were lit, their lights were so brilliant, that they lit up every courtyard in *Yerushalayim*.

The *levi'im*, standing on the fifteen steps overlooking the gathering, played various musical instruments. The greatest *chachamim* and other men of stature danced joyfully, while all the other *Yidden* watched. Some of the *chachamim* 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 *Rabban 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 no one else could achieve.

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 tamid* 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 *tamid* – and then the *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva* began once more."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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*.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Directing the Energy

Today we cannot physically participate in the *Nisuch HaMayim* in the *Beis HaMikdash*. The *Baal HaTanya* 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.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

After *Maariv* on the second night of *Sukkos*, the *Tzemach Tzedek* of *Lubavitch* 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 *farbrengen* he would study a *halacha* in *Choshen Mishpat* 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* (known as *yenikas hachitzonim*).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Rejoicing in our Times

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. In fact, today we even have certain advantages, since with us the rejoicing begins from the first night, and even ordinary people can actively participate.

In order for the *simcha* to be real, we must first appreciate it. On the other hand, this understanding and feeling must find expression in physical dancing.

Consider This



Why did only the great *chachamim* dance at the original *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*? And what changed today?

Can one rejoice without understanding what he is joyous about??

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev

בעל הקדושת לוי "סניגורן של ישראל" - כ"ה תשרי

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev was born in the year 1740 (ת"ק). After his *chassunah*, he went to study by the **Maggid of Mezritch**. He later became the Rav of the city of Berditchev and one of the most famous Rebbes. He was known as the "sanaigor" (advocate) of Yidden, always finding merit for a Yid, whatever the situation. He was *niftar* on 25th of Tishrei, 1809 (תק"ט).

Once, Reb Levi Yitzchak hosted guests in his *sukkah* who were not the most righteous, to say the least. Reb Levi Yitzchak said: "When moshiach will come and Hashem will make the *sukkah* from the skin of the *livyasan*, Avaraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov and other *tzaddikim* are going to be there. I will also want to push in. When they will ask me what I am doing in the *sukkah*, I will

tell them that I too had people over in my *sukkah* which were not worthy of being there..."

Reb Baruch of Mezhibuz would often joke at the expense of Reb Levi Yitzchak. Yet, when one of his *chassidim* told him that Reb Levi Yitzchok had passed away, Reb Baruch became very bitter and locked himself in his room for three days, not allowing anyone to enter and speak with him. Finally, Reb Hershele Ostropoler went in and asked, "I do not understand. During his lifetime, you used to mock the Berditchever Rav, so what is all the sorrow about?" Reb Baruch explained, "When he was alive, I saw that *malachim* and *seraphim* were envious of his *avodas Hashem*, therefore I mocked him, so that he not be harmed."

Library Sparks

The *tzadik* Reb Levi Yitschok of Berdichov zt"l would say that the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* is so great because it is done with the entire body, while most of the other *mitzvos* require the use of particular organs and limbs like the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*, *matza*, lighting candles etc. Here, however, a *yid* enters the *sukkah* completely and even with his *podshovskas* (muddy boots)! Just as he is. The *kedushe* of the *sukkah* surrounds, embraces, and elevates him spiritually!

The *kadmon* Reb Moshe Ben Machir brings in his *sefer Seder Hayom* that the *Daled Minim* represents four different levels of *yidishkeit* found amongst *yidden*. The *esrog* which has a taste and a scent represents the *yid* who is on the highest level - the one who has acquired *torah* and *maasim tovim*, (and that's why he isn't bound with the others). The *lulav* which only has a taste represents the one who has *torah* and no *maasim tovim*. The *hadas* has a scent and no taste which personifies the

one who only has done good deeds. And lastly the *aravah* has no taste and no scent. This stands for the *yid* has no *torah* and *maasim tovim*.

All four *minim* are to be held together in order to be able to recite the *bracha* and to perform the *mitzvah*. So too, Hashem needs every type of *yid* regardless of his spiritual level and strength. They all unite together and create a beautiful, complete picture.

And so he explains the Midrash: לולב זה הקב"ה, הדס זה הקב"ה, אתרוג זה הקב"ה, ערבה זה הקב"ה. The world needs every type of Jew. Hashem's holy name and *Shechinah* rest on all of them!

All fellow Jews together, without any exception will dance with Hashem and his *torah* on *Simchas Torah*! As the *Zohar* says, ישראל ואורייתא וקודשא בריך הוא חד הוא!

Gut Yom Tov!

The Baal Shem Tov Library

1709 Avenue J • Brooklyn NY 11230 • 718-677-9000 • www.thebaalshemtovlibrary.com

Library Hours:

Sunday & Thursday: 2:00 pm - 9:30 pm. Monday - Wednesday: 2:00 pm - 10:30 pm.

Coming Soon: Women's Hours, Women's Library, Lending Library

Standing for a Torah

Is it necessary to stand every time the *aron kodesh* is opened? What about during *hakafos*?

Chazal instruct to stand up for a *Sefer Torah* similarly to how we must stand up for a *talmid chacham*.¹ This would mean to include standing until the *Torah* is out of sight and its bells cannot be heard, or until it is in another domain.² This applies even when one is in the middle of learning.³

When the *Sefer Torah* is on the *bima* or in the *aron kodesh* one may sit. Two reasons are given for this: (1) The large *bima* and *aron kodesh* are a separate domain.⁴ (2) The *Torah* on the *bima* or *aron kodesh* is at rest in its place (like when the *talmid chacham* reaches his place).⁵

Nevertheless, the *minhag* is to show respect and rise when the *aron kodesh* is open.⁶ On *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* when the *aron* is open for lengthy periods of time, one need not exert himself to stand (except for those *tefilos* which require standing: *Avinu Malkeinu*, *Unesaneh Tokef*, *Aleinu*, etc.).

During *hakafos* when the *Torah* is on the ground level, the *Poskim* offer various justifications for the practice to sit in front of the *Torah*. Some say that one fulfills his obligation of showing respect by standing for the actual *hakafa* (the first circle when the *pesukim* are recited) and he may then sit during the additional dancing.⁷ Others say that the crowd around the *Torah* serves as a *mechitza* between the *Torah* and those sitting.⁸ Others argue further that during *hakafos* the entire *shul* is the *Torah's* place (like in the *aron*) when it is not necessary to stand.⁹ However, some are stringent and only sit if holding a *Torah*.¹⁰ Women behind the *mechitza* are in a separate domain and may therefore sit.

In practice: One should stand during the actual *hakafa* and try to stand during the dancing as well. If tired, one may rest in *shul*, and does not need to walk out.

- 1 - קידושין י"ג ע"ב.
- 2 - שו"ע יו"ד סי' רפ"ב ס"ב וברמ"א.
- 3 - שו"ת יד אליהו סי' ד'.
- 4 - רמ"א יו"ד סי' רמ"ב סי"ח וט"ז.
- 5 - שם סי' ק"ג והיינו כשהם גבוהים יט' ורחבים ד' או שהארון מחזיק מ' סאה.
- 6 - ע"פ הליכות שלמה שם.
- 7 - רמ"א יו"ד סי' רמ"ב סי"ח וט"ז.
- 8 - רמ"א יו"ד סי' רמ"ב סי"ח וט"ז.
- 9 - ע"פ הליכות שלמה שם.
- 10 - רמ"א יו"ד סי' רמ"ב סי"ח וט"ז.