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The Role of *Simcha* in *Simchat Beit Ha'Shoeva*

In the fourth and fifth chapters of *Masechet Sukkah*, a number of *mishnayot* deal with the water-libation offered on *Sukkot*, and the festivities and emotions surrounding this event. In broad terms, this can all be encapsulated under the heading of “*Simchat Beit Hashoeva*” (The happiness of the water-drawing).

On this very issue however, there exist two opinions. The *Gemara*, in *Masechet Sukkah* (50b) brings a disagreement as to whether indeed the *Mishnah* calls this celebration one of “*shoeva*” (water-drawing) or one of “*chashuva*” (importance). The *Gemara* does not go down the path of investigating which opinion is most accurate, but rather highlights the truth in both opinions (*Tosfot* 50b s.v. *Vechad Tani Shoeva*).

The *Gemara* begins by addressing the view of “*shoeva*” (water-drawing). In its support the *Gemara* brings the fact that it is indeed from a *pasuk* which states “*Ushavtem Mayim Besason*” [“And you can draw water joyfully”] (*Isaiah* 12) from which the requirement to be happy on this festival is learnt out. “*Ushavtem*” comes from the same Hebrew root as “*shoeva*” and it is thus valid to refer to the event as *Simchat Beit Hashoeva*.

However, this opinion is not so clear-cut. *Tosfot* (s.v. *Chad Tani Shoeva*) cites the *Talmud Yerushalmi* on this issue which states that the view of “*shoeva*” is based on the belief that the name “*Simchat Beit Hashoeva*” relates to the fact that as a result of the *simcha* attained through this *mitzvah*, people would “draw forth” *ruach hakodesh* (Divine spirit) - “for the *Shechina* dwells where there is happiness”.

The *Maharsha* (a later commentary on the *Gemara* from the Polish town of Tiktin) raises two issues

which the *Yerushalmi*, quoted by *Tosfot*, alludes to. His first point is in the fact that whilst the water-libation (the heart of the celebration) was done in the Temple Court, the aforementioned opinion in our *Gemara* refers to the festival as “The Happiness of the House of Water-Drawing” (*Simchat Beit HaShoeva*)- but the water-drawing was not the focus of the festival and occurred at the stream, not in the Temple Court? Why not refer to the festival, asks the *Maharsha*, as “The Happiness of the House of Libation” for the libations were done in the Temple Court as was the rejoicing?

His second question is on the topic of why the *pasuk* in *Isaiah* states “And you will draw water joyfully”- and yet the *Halacha* states that only the *libation* is to be done joyfully?

The *Maharsha's* answer to the two questions is as follows. Regarding the issue of the name “*Simchat Beit Hashoeva*” (The Happiness of the House of Water-Drawing) as opposed to “The Happiness of the House of Libation”, indeed it is this inaccuracy of phraseology which motivates the *Yerushalmi* to learn out from the phrase “*Simchat Beit Hashoeva*” no relationship to a place, rather an allusion to the *ruach hakodesh* which was drawn forth as a direct product of the happiness that surrounded this holy event. Secondly, answers the *Maharsha*, the *pasuk* from *Isaiah* too alludes to this concept. Whilst this *pasuk* may be the source for the requirement to infuse the water-libation with happiness, the *Yerushalmi* understands once again that it is brought as support for the opinion of “*shoeva*” because it is to be read allegorically: “**And you will draw forth** [ruach hakodesh] via the **water** [libation] which shall be done **joyfully**”.

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Revision Questions

סוכה גי: ט"ו – ה': ג'

- Can one return the *lulav* to water on *Shabbat*? (גי: ט"ו)
- What difference does *R' Yehuda* place between *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* regarding the previous question? (גי: ט"ו)
- How many days of *Sukkot* were the following performed: (ד': א')

 - *Lulav*? (ד': ב')
 - *Hallel*? (ד': ח')
 - *Nisuch HaMayim*?
 - *Aravah*? (ד': ג')
 - *Chalil*?
 - *Sukkah*? (ד': ח')

- Describe how the *mitzvah* of *lulav* was originally performed in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. (ד': ד')
- For what reason was the process described in the previous question modified? (ד': ד')
- Describe how the *mitzvah* of *aravah* was performed in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. (ד': ה')
- What would they say as they completed the *hakafof*? (ד': ה')
- How would the *mitzvah* of *aravah* differ on *Shabbat*? (ד': ו')
- What would the *tinokot* do after the *mitzvah* of *aravah* was performed on the seventh day of *Sukkot*? (ד': ז')
- Why was it important for the *Mishnah* to teach the number of days of *Sukkot* that *Hallel* is recited? (ד': ח')
- What would they do once they had finished eating in the *sukkah* on the seventh day of *Sukkot*? (ד': ח')
- How big was the flask used for *nisuch hamayim*? (ד': ט')
- From where would they fill the flask with water? (ד': ט')
- Describe how the *mitzvah* of *nisuch hamayim* was performed in the *Beit HaMikdash*? (ד': ט')
- Which of the two pipes was the water poured into and where was it located? (ד': ט')
- How would the *mitzvah* of *nisuch hamayim* differ on *Shabbat*? (ד': י')
- What was the *chalil*? (ה': א')
- Complete the following phrase: (ה': א')
 "_____ _____ _____ השואבה"
 "_____ _____ _____ השואבה"
- Where was the *simchat beit ha' shoevah* celebrated? (ה': ב')
- What was used as wicks for the lamps? (ה': ג')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
30 th April ב' אייר י"ז לעומר Sukkah 5:4-5	1 st May ג' אייר י"ח לעומר Sukkah 5:6-7	2 nd May ד' אייר י"ט לעומר Sukkah 5:8 – Beitzah 1:1	3 rd May ה' אייר כ' לעומר Beitzah 1:2-3	4 th May ו' אייר כ"א לעומר Beitzah 1:4-5	5 th May ז' אייר כ"ב לעומר Beitzah 1:6-7	6 th May ח' אייר כ"ג לעומר Beitzah 1:8-9

