

A Diary – Lag B’omer Parade 5743-1983

The Lag B’omer Parade of 1983 was going to be extra special. A beautiful regal platform was built for the Rebbe. On his side was a smaller platform for Rabbi JJ Hecht and Rabbi “Uncle” Yossi Goldstein who would emcee the program, and Eli Lipskier’s band.

The parade would be marching, as usual, down Eastern Parkway past 770 and in front of the Rebbe, and for the first time this year, the parade would continue all the way to Empire Boulevard for the fair and carnival.

Before the parade, Rabbi Yossi Goldstein explained the importance of the day of Lag B’omer, and the boys’ choir entertained.

The Rebbe Enters

The Parade began with the Rebbe’s entrance through the main door of 770 onto the platform at approximately 11:15 am.

As was the custom at all rallies and parades, the program began with boys and girls from many different backgrounds and yeshivos, leading the children in reciting the 12 Pesukim, followed by the Tzivos Hashem anthem “We Want Moshiach Now.”

The highlight of the parade, as usual, was the Rebbe’s address to the children.

There were talks, and Rabbi J.J. Hecht translated after each one.



The Rebbe’s Address

In the talk, the Rebbe taught a lesson from Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai for whom *Toras Umnaso*, Torah study was his “occupation.” The Rebbe explained that we, too, must emulate his example. Our most important endeavor must be

Torah. This is even more applicable to children, whose parents care for their physical needs, so can dedicate themselves solely to Torah.

After Rabbi Hecht translated, the Rebbe began to speak again, learning a lesson from Rabbi Akiva and his students. We must look at our fellow Jew as a fellow disciple of Rabbi Akiva and respect him accordingly. This type of Ahavas Yisrael will hasten the Geula.



In the third talk, the Rebbe said that every day we must feel the need and pray for Moshiach. Rabbi Avraham Halevi would recite the ‘Nachem’ prayer every day. We must feel urgency to get out of the *golus*, even on Shabbos and Yomtov. However, the Rebbe explained, Lag B’omer is such a special day, that even Rabbi Avraham should not have said ‘Nachem.’

The Rebbe was speaking so intensely on this subject, that we could feel that the Geula, and the urgency to bring Moshiach, was so real to him.

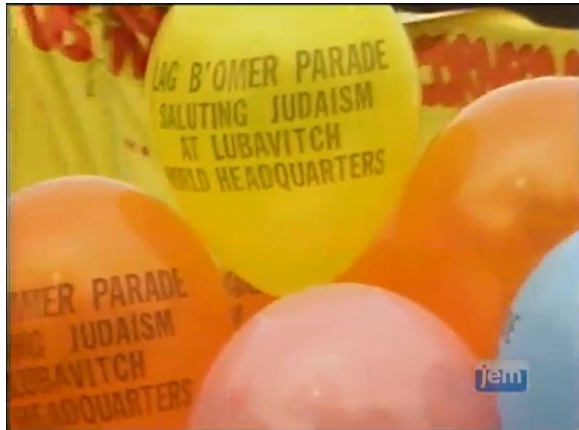
After the Rebbe’s address, he requested that Chazan Teleshevsky lead the singing of Sheyibaneh.

Then the parade began.

The Parade

First were the flags – of Merkos, Mesibos Shabbos, and the Stars and Stripes.

Then a contingent from the U.S. Army Reserve with Chaplain Jacob Goldstein marched by, followed by a procession of drummers from the local Yeshiva boys schools, the procession has officially begun.



There were some very creative floats!
Here are a few:

- A model of The Beis Hamikdash.
- A person on a yacht, wrapped in a Tallis, illustrating the story told by the Rebbe at the Farbrengen a few weeks ago.
- A replica of the WLCC Broadcast room.
- A series of cars, each with a caricature representing one of the ten Mitzvoim.
- At the Rebbe's specific request, one float featured huge petitions to the President and the Congress about the Moment of Silence, and the other was about funding for parochial schools. This float stopped in front of the Rebbe, to give him time to read the petitions.

Thousands of children, from many schools across the Jewish spectrum, marched in the parade. Some of the groups travelled many hours to join the parade! They received special welcomes from the MC.

Many of the children were carrying signs and banners. The Rebbe looked at them all, smiling and waving to many of them.

At the end of the parade, Chazan Teleshevsky was requested to come up for the second time, and lead the singing of Sheyibane which the Rebbe strongly encouraged.

During this song, the Rebbe motioned that we should all dance. All the men who were still present at that point – mostly us students – formed a circle right in front of the grandstand. The Rebbe clapped and encouraged us very strongly. At one point, he called out "Faster!" and the band played as fast as they could.

At about 2:00 pm, the Rebbe returned to his room in 770.

Carnival & Fair

After marching in the parade, the crowds continued down Kingston Avenue towards Empire, where a full carnival and fair was continuing. Along the way there are many booths, some selling tickets and nosh, others offering passers-by a chance to lay Tefillin, buy a letter in a Sefer Torah, and many other Mitzvah opportunities.

At 4:00 pm, the Rebbe left 770 to go to the Ohel. The fair on Empire Boulevard was going on in full force. Totally unexpectedly, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Krinsky to drive via Empire Boulevard, so that he could see the fair.

As the Rebbe's car drove slowly on Empire Boulevard, he smiled and waved to many children and onlookers.



The Rebbe obviously enjoyed these few moments, and the crowds there were very excited that the Rebbe!

Later on, the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Hecht, "**I saw with my own eyes the success on Empire Boulevard.**"