

# עדת אש קודש Adass Aish Kodesh

## A THREE-HANKIE MOMENT

**Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita**

We all have them—and if we don't, we should look within ourselves to find out why. I am referring to those sentimental moments when your eyes well up and you find yourself dissolving into a pool of emotional jelly. There is an expression, a "three-hankie moment," that captures it perfectly: a time so emotional it would take three handkerchiefs to contain the volume of your tears.

Last night, I experienced just such a moment. It was not unexpected, yet its impact was no less powerful. Every chasseneh has its special moments, and for each participant, the experience is different. For this proud Zeidy, it is always the moment the badchan calls me up to dance with my newly-wedded granddaughter. Although, boruch Hashem, I am no novice to the role, I still "lose it" with each fresh occasion.

To the uninitiated, the minhag in Chassidische families is to perform a Mitzvah Tantz at the end of the wedding. Close family members are called to dance "before" the bride, fulfilling the mitzvah of bringing her joy. For a Zeidy, this is an extremely moving occasion. You face this young child—one you have cared for as only a grandparent can—and you simply want to protect her forever. As you dance, your heart cries out to Hashem that this neshomeleh and her soulmate should never have to face life's harshness. Oh, if only you could keep them enclosed in this moment of loving safety.

Through the tears, you see the young bridegroom standing there, filled with hope. He seems to be saying, "I will be there for her," and with that, you dance and sing your blessings for them both.

I first shared the words above with my readers about a dozen years ago. Since then, time has taken me to different places, both fiscally and emotionally, and the "order of operations" at today's weddings has changed as well. Last night, I attended the chassanah of my son's youngest daughter. Raised in Scotland and schooled mostly at home, she has emerged with an amazing love for Yiddishkeit and a will to give to others. Her chosson seems cut from the same cloth; his love for our traditions permeates his every smile.



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Today's weddings have evolved in one specific area: there is much more music involved, particularly the communal chanting of Torah content. The young men sway, the words rise into the very air we breathe, and watching these young neshomos bursting with ahavah for our way of life is beyond description. Though the tableau may have changed, the Kedusha builds into a fabulous outbreak of spirited dancing.

Sitting at the top table, we "oldies" sometimes cover our ears from the loud, thumping beat, but deep down, we are envious of the spiritual outbreak we are witnessing. We turn to one another and say, "Who would have thought?" In our younger days, Zeidies were thin on the ground, and every movement was governed by rigid, unwritten rules.

For me, there is another facet to these simchas. My Rebbetzin, o'h, is no longer here physically, but her overflowing love for her family still pours forth. I visited her graveside on the morning of the wedding; it is important to me to let my heart touch upon her spirit at such times. Before I started my dance, I whispered to my granddaughter that I had asked Bubby to dance in our hearts as we shared our prayers.

We beseech Hashem as we shuffle about—this young girl who is now a woman. Her shoulders shudder with prayer, and in your heart, you know somehow all is well. The chosson comes forward, takes Zeidy's arm, and the old man relinquishes his hold, giving his cherished child over to new hands.

This is the dance of the Jewish soul: in the face of everything, we sing to Hashem.