

# בחצרות קדרשנו

*Chassidim share their*  
**TISHREI "MOMENT"**  
*with the REBBE*

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## ויהי בשלושים שנה ROSH HASHANAH 5746

Rabbi Asi Spiegel - Tzfas, Eretz Yisroel

Sometimes, we have to wait an entire Tishrei until we reach Simchas Torah. But sometimes, we get Simchas Torah together with Rosh Hashanah.

This is what happened on Rosh Hashanah 5746 (תשמ"ו), thirty years ago.

It is known that Rosh Hashanah is the "head" that includes within it the energy of the coming year, and so obviously, Rosh Hashanah includes within it the other holidays of Tishrei too. So during Rosh Hashanah we do experience a little bit of Yom Kippur, Sukkos, and Simchas Torah.

But in reality, the "head" of the year is a serious time so we don't always feel the happy energy of those other holidays on Rosh Hashanah. Still, there were some

occasions that we did see by the Rebbe a strong Simchas Torah feeling in the middle of Rosh Hashanah. One of those times was 5746.

The year 5745 ended with the affair of the "*seforim*," which rocked Lubavitch, and many people were speculating that the overhanging cloud of the court case would be felt during Tishrei with the Rebbe.

I think they were right and I remember the farbrengen of that Rosh Hashanah quite well.

In the first *sicha* the Rebbe spoke at length about the importance of *hiskashrus* to our Rebbeim, and how it is expressed by mentioning their names and singing their *niggunim*. In the *maamar*, the Rebbe said that *malchuyos*, the crowning of Hashem,

is done "*b'simcha gedola*." Perhaps the Rebbe was preparing us for what was to come. Then, the Rebbe said a *sicha* regarding the daily Rambam.

At the end of the Rambam *sicha* the Rebbe spoke again of the great importance of *simcha*, especially when we are involved in doing mitzvos. He then asked that everyone present say *l'chaim* and sing a *niggun* of Simchas Torah. In the Rebbe's words: "*A Simchas Torah'dike niggun*."

The *niggun* which was usually sung after such a request from the Rebbe was the *Niggun Hakofos* of his father *Kvod Kedushas HaRav Levi Yitzchak*.

Whoever is familiar with this *niggun* knows that it is a very uplifting melody, which expresses a rising above the ordinary reality. When

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we sing this *niggun* in an “orderly fashion,” we usually start it in the beginning, and slowly pick up pace as the melody pulls us up higher and higher. This is a *niggun* of three parts; the climax of the *niggun* is in the middle of the third part.

But the way the Rebbe liked to sing it (and Chassidim follow him of course) was to begin the *niggun* right at the climax—in middle of the third part! Why? What’s the message here? Perhaps the Rebbe is teaching us that sometimes we need to begin at the highest place right away.

As the Rebbe concluded the *sicha*, the Chassidim started saying *lchaim* and singing the Simchas Torah *niggun* of the Rebbe’s father, as the Rebbe requested.

I too filled a little cup as I was trying to catch the Rebbe’s eyes to receive a nod and a *bracha* of *lchaim* back from the Rebbe.

Suddenly, to the surprise of everyone present, the Rebbe stood up and started dancing in his place! What an amazing scene. When the Rebbe jumped up 770 went completely wild.

I saw the first second of it and then, without any warning I flew from my place and noticed that instead of looking at the Rebbe I am now looking at the ceiling...

During the farbrengens, and especially during Tishrei, the desire to see the Rebbe had people standing on random boxes and all kinds of makeshift bleachers. But these props were very fragile and if you moved them too much... Well, you can imagine what happened.

When the Rebbe got up to dance, of course the entire 770 crowd jumped into the air and so I fell off my box. But this was not a moment to be missed and I quickly regained my balance. So too, the rest of 770 recovered immediately from the moment of chaos and settled into our positions once again, in rhythm

with the Rebbe. What a sight to see the Rebbe dancing as I’d never seen before! During farbrengens the Rebbe motioned with his hands many times and even clapped, of course. But getting up to dance was a completely different story. Everyone knew that this kind of *simcha* was very “serious business”—especially when it was all happening at the Rosh Hashanah farbrengen!

People were so surprised to see the Rebbe dancing because the last time it happened was nearly six years earlier, in 5739! I saw the Rebbe for the first time the year before and I didn’t expect such a dance either.

Everybody knows that each word the Rebbe said and even each movement of his body has a reason. Nothing was just “*stam*.” So when the Rebbe wanted us to sing a “*Simchas Torah’dike niggun*” on that Rosh Hashanah and when the Rebbe danced like that at the farbrengen—certainly this action was having an affect on the entire upcoming year.

Indeed, in 5746 the Rebbe would get up to dance at farbrengens four more times!

During the *sichos* of that winter, as well as the next year, after *Didan Notzach*, the Rebbe said that the *kitrug* of the court case was a spiritual accusation that Lubavitch was “not doing enough.” It seems to me that at that special moment the Rebbe pushed all of us to do a lot more than before, and as the Rebbe teaches us: In order to do more, we need to be more *b’simcha*.

Throughout that year, the Rebbe continued to stress the importance of *simcha*, *achdus*, and demanding the *geula* now. At that Rosh Hashanah farbrengen, which headed off the whole year, the Rebbe with his arm swings literally picked up the entire 770 and threw us into the air, spurring us to do much much more, and to do it with lots of *simcha*!





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## Heavenly Affairs

### YOM KIPPUR 5737

Rabbi Yossi Groner - Charlotte, NC

#### Intro

Another name for the month of Tishrei is *Chodesh Hashvi'i*—the seventh month. The word *shvi'i* has the same etymology as the word *sovah*—satisfaction. The month of Tishrei is a *chodesh shemesuba bakol*—filled abundantly with spiritual inspiration. From the *Yomim Noraim* and all the inyanim *ruchniyim* that come with them, to Sukkos and Simchas Torah and the joy that they bring. While this is obviously true in all places and at all times, it is augmented and magnified in the presence of the Rebbe. There were scores of inspirational experiences and interactions with the Rebbe, in continuous succession throughout the month. This began, I would say, from the farbrengen on Chai Elul and continued throughout all the *yemei haslichos*. With Rosh Hashanah began an added spirit, with *tekios*, etc., followed with Yom Kippur and leading up to a culmination on Simchas Torah, when there would be *giluyim* like no other time during the year.

#### Permission to come

I give thanks to Hashem that I was *zoche* to experience Tishrei with the Rebbe for so many years, up until I went out on shlichus to North Carolina in 5740. In the following years, although I had a very strong yearning to be with the Rebbe, I knew that the Rebbe would want me to remain in my *makom hashlichus*, and there I stayed.

Before discussing specifics about what Yom Kippur was like by the Rebbe, I would like to digress with a short personal story that I had regarding Tishrei with the Rebbe.

Ten years after we had left on shlichus, in the year 5750, I experienced a special occurrence. After not having been by the Rebbe for Tishrei for nine consecutive years, my longing to be by the Rebbe—if only for a Simchas Torah—had peaked. Although by that time we had other shluchim working with us in Charlotte and had I left, I wouldn't be completely abandoning the community, I didn't feel like I could leave. With absence

of explicit *reshus* or at the very least a sign of some sort from the Rebbe, I wouldn't dare leave my shlichus to come to 770. By the time *Shabbos Shuva* came around, it was disturbing me so much that I asked of Hashem that I should merit receiving a sign from the Rebbe allowing me to go.

That particular year Yom Kippur fell on a Monday (Sunday night) and on Motzoei Shabbos Shuva my twin brother, Rabbi Mendel Groner—a rosh yeshiva in Kiryat Gat, Eretz Yisroel—flew to New York to be by the Rebbe for the remainder of Tishrei (he would usually remain in Kiryat Gat until *seder hayeshiva* ended). On Sunday, Erev Yom Kippur he went by the Rebbe to receive *lekach*. When his turn came to receive *lekach* the Rebbe turned to my father—the Rebbe's *mazkir* Rabbi Leibel Groner—and asked him: “*Dos is der zun fun Carolina?*”

Now to be sure, the Rebbe knew us apart very well. Even when we would go by the Rebbe for dollars on the same day at different times, the Rebbe would immediately give us

## His face shining and with a fiery look, the Rebbe would bang on his *shtender* to signal the Chassidim to begin singing Napoleon's March.

a *bracha* relevant to our individual *makom hashlichus* without asking who we were. Besides this, we know that a Rebbe doesn't make random mistakes; at that time for me, it was a clear sign from the Rebbe that my request had been approved.

I tell this story just to give an idea of the passion and excitement we felt toward spending this special time with the Rebbe.

What I'd like to focus on however, is Yom Kippur in particular.

### *Dem Rebbe's Kinder*

Of course, Yom Kippur is a very serious and "*erensteh*" time for every Yid. For us Chassidim though, generally speaking, our mood was very much a reflection of the Rebbe's conduct at any noteworthy time. Yom Kippur, as can be expected, was probably the most solemn time that we ever experienced in the *daled amos* of the Rebbe. *Mincha* on *Erev Yom Kippur* is when the *avoda* of the day begins, with *viduy*, etc. and by the Rebbe this was only intensified. Following *mincha*, the Rebbe would turn to the Chassidim to *bentch* them; that's when the specialty of the day would start to set in. (While in the earlier years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, this was generally kept to a short *bracha*, over the years it developed into a *sicha*.)

For the *bochurim* especially, *Erev Yom Kippur* carried a very moving feeling. As The fast comes in, it is the *minhag* for fathers to *bentch* their children. By the Rebbe, beginning in the year 5712, he would enter the room already wearing his *kittel* and *tallis* to *bentch* the *yeshiva bochurim*. The Rebbe explained this custom saying what have now become the

famous words: "איר לערנט דאך אין דעם; זייט איר דאך דעם רבי'נס רבי'נס ישיבה; קינדער". Obviously, it was an incredibly stirring feeling for the Rebbe to bless us *bochurim* as a father does his son. Consequently, it was a time when every *bochur* made sure to be present and there was lots of pushing to be there. To better accommodate the crowds, the location was moved several times until in the later years it would take place in the upstairs *zal*.

### *Day of Awe*

This serious atmosphere presided throughout Yom Kippur, but for us, the greatest highlights would be from *mincha* onwards. Unlike Rosh Hashana, when the Rebbe would say the *pesukim*, blow *tekios* and *farbreng*, on Yom Kippur itself, our first interaction with the Rebbe came during *mincha* when the Rebbe would recite *Maftir Yonah*. For those of us who still had the energy, it was a challenge to try to get a spot near the Rebbe both for *Maftir Yonah* and *Ne'illa*, when the Rebbe would return to his place.

The awesomeness of the day grew with *Ne'ilah*, when the Rebbe displayed tremendous intensity. When describing the Rebbe's *Ne'ilah*, the word intensity comes to mind because of the strength of the feeling surrounding the Rebbe. It all reached a climax when before *tekias shofar* the Rebbe would turn to face the crowd. His face shining and with a fiery look, the Rebbe would bang on his *shtender* to signal the Chassidim to begin singing Napoleon's March. It was during Napoleon's March when the mood of seriousness which prevailed over the *Yomim Noraim* was transformed into a feeling of

tremendous joy. In the exhilaration of it all, we forgot that we were tired, we forgot that we were hungry; if it would have lasted an hour, it would have continued with the same enthusiasm, which only increased as time went on.

### *A child's innocence*

There is one incident that stands out in my memory. Yom Kippur of the year 5737 there was lots of pushing to get close to the Rebbe's place. The Rebbe turned toward the crowd and was very displeased with what was happening. The Rebbe motioned the crowd to move back and signaled for the children to be brought to the front. Quickly, the children in the surrounding area were passed overhead to be close to the Rebbe. When the rest of the people saw what was happening, they sent their children over as well. In short time, the area around the Rebbe was filled with children.

I distinctly remember how during *Avinu Malkein* the Rebbe was weeping and his entire body shaking throughout. What was happening during that time I don't know but there were certainly some unique things going on in the spiritual realms, and its effect was tangible. I remember that at the time there was a particular child who was crying. When his father asked him if he was crying because he was being pushed he answered that he was not. "Why were you crying so much then," his father asked. With a special innocence that only a young child can have, the boy responded, "The Rebbe is crying so much, how could I not cry?"

Such was the uniqueness of those days in that time. Let us daven that this year once again we can be witness to these revelations and beyond. This year, even before the *Yomim Noraim*, Moshiach will usher in the *geulah shleima* when we'll be reunited with our Rebbe once again.



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## Full-Circle

### SUKKOS - SIMCHAS TORAH 5734

Rabbi Shimon Druk - Oak Park, MI

**“I am currently in a state of joy, why must you bewilder me...?”**

If there is one Simcha Torah that I will never forget, it was 5734, the year of the Yom Kippur war. From the start, the whole Tishrei was unique; many special things took place.

On the second night of Sukkos, Rabbi Hodakov announced that the Rebbe would hold a special farbrengen in *shul* immediately after *maariv*. We were quite surprised to hear the news, as it had already been a few years since the Rebbe officially no longer held farbrengens on Sukkos.

At the farbrengen, the Rebbe said that he wants there to be joyous farbrengens, non-stop until Simchas Torah: “Farbreng tonight, tomorrow morning, tomorrow night, the next morning, the next night, Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Monday, morning and night...” The Rebbe continued on to specify through

Simchas Torah, and then concluded, “Until it will be ‘*Umala ha’aretz farbrengish’n es Hav’aye kamayim...*’”

Another pleasant and absolutely unexpected surprise took place later, on Shabbos Chol Hamoed; again a farbrengen in the Shul!

(It is interesting to note: A few of the elder Chassidim approached the Rebbe with a *pan* regarding the situation in Eretz Yisrael. The Rebbe seemed to be very displeased, and he told them, “I am currently in a state of joy, why must you bewilder me? Either way, since you have already done this, form a *minyán* and go to the Ohel with this *pan*; but I will not accept it.”)

On the night of Shmini Atzeres before the fourth *hakafa*, the Rebbe said that all those who serve or once served in *צהל* (the IDF) should be honored with the



next *hakafa*. Then an amazing thing happened; instead of turning to his *shtender* to say the *pesukim* together with the *chazzan*, the Rebbe picked up his *siddur*, approached the front of the *bima*, and began reciting the *pesukim* ("Kol Hashem...") to the tune of "*Ho'aderes v'hoemuna, tzu vemen...*" and everyone responded with the same tune "*Lchai olamim.*"

When the Rebbe reached the words "*neimos bimincha netzach,*" he shouted them out in a very loud voice. Then the Rebbe began to encourage the singing with great vigor and enthusiasm, clapping in a very unusual fashion, turning his hands in a certain direction, and bending over towards someone. All this from the front of his *bima*, which was also quite unusual (as the Rebbe would generally remain by his place near the wall during the intermediary *hakafos*).

I looked closely and noticed that the Rebbe was turning towards Reb Shlomo Matusof, the Shliach in Morocco, with this special clapping.

The following night, *hakafos* was once again very unique. Before the fourth *hakafa*, the *sifrei Torah* were given to some of the elder Chassidim, and "Moshiach's Sefer Torah" was given to Reb Shmuel Azimov from France. At the beginning of the *hakafa*, the Rebbe summoned one of the *mazkirim* and told him something. Immediately, an announcement was made that all the French guests present should participate in this *hakafa*. Every single one of them should partake, even if there wouldn't be enough *sifrei Torah* for each one.

After all of them arrived at the center of the *shul*, one of the elder Chassidim began a *niggun* anticipating the Rebbe's encouragement; but that's when the unpredicted surprise came about. The Rebbe motioned not to sing this *niggun* now and the entire *shul* was silent instantly. The Rebbe walked to the end of the *bima* with his *siddur*

in hand and started to sing a *niggun* that no one in the crowd recognized.

The members of the French group slowly began to identify the *niggun*. "It's the Marseilles!" they whispered one to another. After a short while, all the French guests caught on and joined in the song excitedly. Then again, I noticed how the Rebbe is enthusiastically encouraging Reb Shlomo Matusof in the same unique and personal fashion.

**"How can you be moneia bar?" they said. "We are young bochurim, we never saw the Rebbe; please say something!"**

Fast-forward forty years. It was Tishrei 5774 and I was giving a car-ride to a few *bochurim*. While I was driving, they asked me to relate my memories from Simchas Torah with the Rebbe. I responded that I was driving at the moment and it would be hard for me to organize my thoughts and recap what to tell them, but the *bochurim* insisted that I say something. "How can you be *moneia bar*?" they said. "We are young *bochurim*, we never saw the Rebbe; please say something!"

I gave it some more thought and decided that I must say something. Just because I'm uncomfortable speaking at this point, isn't enough of a reason for these *bochurim* to miss out. What could I tell them, I thought? which Simchas Torahs stuck out in my mind as very unique? (Although to be sure every Simchas Torah was very special.)

I began telling them about Simchas Torah 5734, making mention of how I witnessed these incredible "*iddudim*" to Reb Shlomo Matusof. All the while,

I thought to myself: was that really the case? Was the Rebbe actually encouraging Reb Shlomo, or perhaps it was merely my imagination? It could have been directed at anyone...

As I finished speaking, we reached our destination. Later, one of the *bochurim* approached me and told me something very interesting that he heard from his uncle, Reb Reuven Matusof (Reb Shlomo's son):

In those years, shluchim needed a special permission to come in to the Rebbe. They were usually only allowed to come once a year, or once in every two years. That Sukkos, Reb Shlomo got permission to come to New York. Throughout the whole Sukkos, he noticed that the Rebbe was expressing special *kiruvim* to many of the younger shluchim present, but to him the Rebbe wasn't paying any attention.

He thought to himself, "Maybe I'm doing something wrong that the Rebbe isn't happy with me. Why is it that the Rebbe is not paying attention to me?" Then, on Simchas Torah, the Rebbe gave him this very special *kiruv*. One can only imagine how he felt as the Rebbe bent over towards him and encouraged him in such a manner.

This entire episode was a very telling experience for me. I learned my lesson: "בא ללמד ונמצא למד". Most of my friends hadn't even noticed that the Rebbe was encouraging Reb Shlomo, and for all these years, I thought that perhaps it was a figment of my imagination. It took a *bochur* who never saw the Rebbe to come along so many years later, and point out something which was so amazing to me; something I had never understood.

Anyone who has memories from the Rebbe must give them over to the younger generation. These are not private memories; these belong to each and every Chossid!

May we be *zoche* to spend this Tishrei with the Rebbe *b'gashmiyus*.



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## Surprise Dance

### SIMCHAS TORAH 5733

Rabbi Meir Shneur - Montreal, QC

It was Simchas Torah day 5733. *Hakafos* were over and preparations were underway for the farbrengen later that day. The following scene I didn't witness myself but word of it rapidly spread around 770: The Rebbe returned to 770 from *seudas yom tov* at his home. On his way in through the main entrance of 770, he noticed Reb Berel Lipsker dancing alone with a *sefer Torah* in the *zal*. The Rebbe walked over to the door of the *zal* and started to clap, encouraging Reb Berel's singing and dancing. After a minute or so, the Rebbe went back to his room, took off his coat, and returned to the hallway where he continued to encourage Reb Berel vigorously. This incident spread around 770 like wildfire, and people understood that the Rebbe was in a very joyous spirit.

Right before the farbrengen, the Rebbe would daven *mincha* with the *minyan* upstairs. Meanwhile, most people would save their places for the

farbrengen downstairs. With everyone occupied with making sure they had a good spot by the farbrengen, naturally *mincha* consisted of a fairly small crowd. Only those who had a *makom kavuah* downstairs and were guaranteed they wouldn't lose their place, would be by *mincha*. I had a *makom kavuah*, so I took part in the Rebbe's *minyan*.

Before the Rebbe entered, Reb Yoel (who was aware of the incident earlier that day) suggested that we sing and dance to a *freilicher niggun*, saying that if the Rebbe appreciates the dancing so much while he is present, it must be quite important to keep it up even while he isn't there. We started to sing the niggun *Al Hasela*. In those years, it wasn't customary to sing when the Rebbe entered the *shul*, but in this case, as soon as the Rebbe exited *Gan Eden Hatachton* on his way in to the *zal*, the Rebbe started to clap.

First, the Rebbe walked over to his *shtender* on the other side of the room

(where he would daven on Shabbos and Yom Tov) and stood there for a few minutes vigorously encouraging the singing. Then an amazing thing happened: the Rebbe pushed away the table, and literally leapt up onto his chair. The crowd assembled was very small, consisting of only 20 or 30 people. The Rebbe then started to dance with great enthusiasm on his chair. How the Rebbe balanced himself like that on such a chair, I do not know, but the Rebbe was literally jumping up and down on his chair to the tune we were singing. It was incredible. The Rebbe's eyes were closed some of the time as he continued to dance, jumping up and down. I never saw the Rebbe dance like that! One can imagine how it felt to be standing less than two feet away from the Rebbe as this went on, being one of only about 30 people in the room. Unbelievable! **T**