

# We Are All *One*. Really?

EXAMINING A  
FASCINATING  
LAG B'OMER  
ADDRESS BY  
THE REBBE

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לעילוי נשמת  
מרת חנה לאה בת הרה"ת ר'  
שמעון ע"ה  
ברוק  
נלב"ע ז' טבת ה'תשע"א  
ת"נצ"ב'ה'  
נדפס על ידי ולזכות  
משפחתה שיחיו  
משפחות ברוק, באנון, דייטש  
ניו יארק. פלארידא.  
מאנטאנא. מאנטרעאל.



## Look outside your window. *What do you see?*

When we look at the world around us, we often see a collage of so many different things. Every area, every item, every plant, and every creature is so different from every other. When it comes to individual people, no person is the same as another. In fact, our differences are often a source of animosity or strife. The same is true with collective peoples—no two nations are the same; each has a distinct culture, customs, and traditions. This too, often leads to strife and hostilities among nations.

The truth is that this is the way Hashem intended the world to be.

By contemplating how many different creations Hashem has made, we appreciate His infinite greatness all the more, as the *possuk* says, “מה רבו מעשיריך,” ה' קלם בְּחִכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ וְגו' Hashem, You created them all with wisdom.”<sup>1</sup>

At the same time that we appreciate the variety and diversity of Hashem's world, seeing *only* the differences can lead to misconception and worse.

The Rebbe teaches us that it is our job to look beyond the surface and to recognize that at its core, everything and everyone in the world is truly part of one single existence, created by one Creator for one singular purpose: to reveal His glory in the world.

The *sicha* of the Lag B'Omer parade in 5750 is foundational, even revolutionary in this regard.

Below, we will explore some of the key ideas the Rebbe conveyed, as well as several extraordinary expressions and mentions that make this *sicha* especially interesting.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally, a major theme of Lag B'Omer is the lessons from the life and teachings of Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai, whose *yom hahilula* we mark. As we shall see, a common denominator of those lessons is the importance of unity; first unity within the Jewish people themselves, the unity of all nations with one another, and ultimately a unity that can be revealed throughout the entirety of Hashem's creation.

# The Golden Menorah

Before we discuss Lag B'Omer itself, there's a general lesson in the fact that this day is part of *Sefiras Ha'Omer*. *Sefira* is comprised of seven weeks, connected with the seven branches of the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash. Immediately, a sense of Jewish unity is apparent:

The *navi* Zecharia describes a vision that he saw of a Menorah made of pure gold. Its seven branches, Chassidus teaches, represent seven types of Jews, each with a distinctive path to serving Hashem. Every Jew specializes in serving Hashem through one of the seven *middos* (emotional faculties).

We first find this phenomenon in our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. Each served Hashem with their entire being—their whole existence was a *merkava*, a vehicle, for carrying out Hashem's will. Yet their methods differed greatly from one another: Avraham's primary approach was *Chessed* and *ahava*, love for Hashem, while Yitzchok's was *Gevura* and *yira*, awe of Hashem. Yaakov represents *Tiferes*, beauty, combining and harmonizing the two approaches.

The same is true of the Jewish people as a whole: We all serve Hashem with our hearts, as the Torah says, "*B'chol livav'cha*—with all your heart." But within our hearts, we each have a unique approach as to how we best serve Hashem. Nevertheless, the seven branches all come together to form one single golden Menorah.

Difference need not lead to division. On the contrary, true unity comes from a synthesis of different—and even opposite—approaches.

## To the World

As we stand here at a Lag B'Omer parade, we also take a lesson from Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai's focus on the *possuk*, "*Hinei mah tov umah na'im, sheves achim gam yachad*—How good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together."

A parade is a symbol of unity. Firstly, it's about the Jewish children gathered here at this parade. Each and every one of us are truly brothers, and we must develop and feel love for one another.

Rebbi Shimon's teacher, from whom he acquired all of his knowledge as well as his character traits, was Rebbi Akiva. He taught us that the mitzvah of loving your fellow as yourself is a "great principle of the Torah." This love should extend to every Jew, and also to everything

Jewish—including the mitzvah of tzedakah.

The mitzvah of tzedakah includes non-Jews as well. It is our job to influence non-Jews to serve Hashem properly, and to teach them about tzedakah, to help another individual in need, to the point that the other person should, in turn, be able to give tzedakah himself!

The goal is for every nation to recognize that we all have One Creator. Not only did he create the world many years ago, He constantly *recreates* the world, as the Baal Shem Tov taught, every day, and every second.

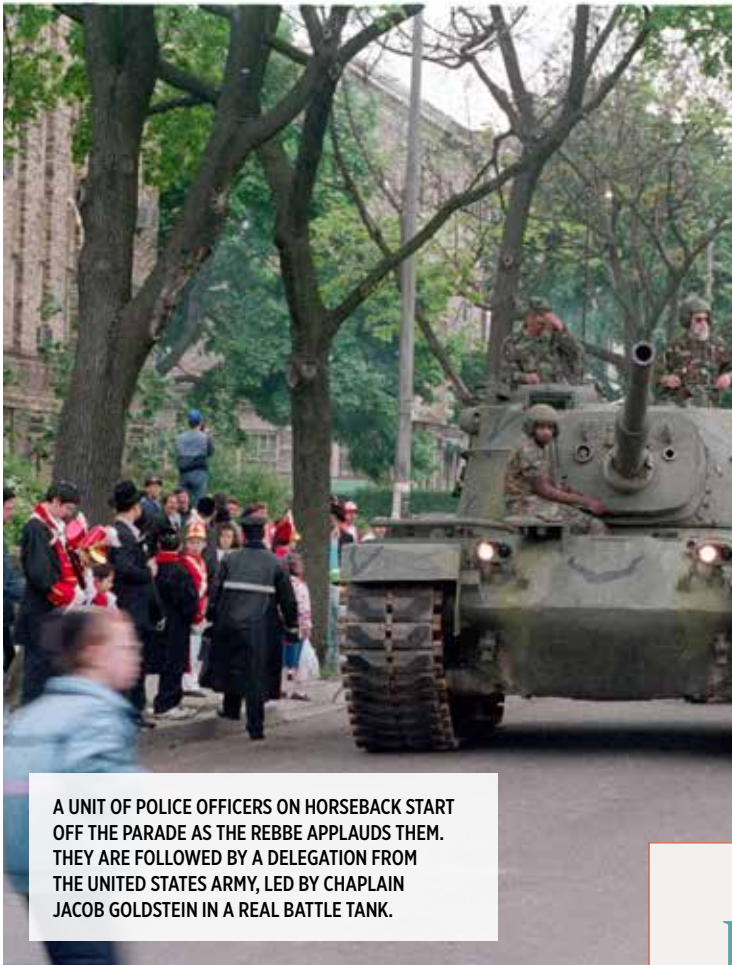
With this recognition, we should be able to spread goodness and kindness between nations. Instead of fearing one another, as has so often been the case throughout history, we should all get along and cooperate with one another. In fact, if we observe another nation acting badly, instead of fighting, we should use our influence to get them to change their ways. Free them from their bad traits and habits, and instead teach them to practice tzedakah as well.

Hashem has given us so many resources. He sustains the whole world with grace, with kindness, and with mercy (as we say in *Birkas Hamazon*). One of the most important ways that each person and nation can serve Hashem is by using those resources for tzedakah; helping other individuals and other nations in need.

Once the nations of the world are taken care of and people are getting along, a new era of progress will be ushered in: A healthy sense of competition. Each nation will strive to go higher, and the world at large will progress from one level to the next. This will serve as a preparation for the time when the whole world will be so filled with G-dliness that we will recognize Hashem in everything around us. Every element in this world will demonstrate that it was created by Hashem and must be used for good, proper, and holy purposes.

## Within Nature

When all of this is accomplished, we can be sure that no part of the world will stand in our way. On the contrary; we will find that the world is helping us towards our goal of making it a better place. There are so many good things in the world, because ultimately everything was created by Hashem. All we have to do is increase positive influences and free the world of the negative forces. Then we will see the good in everything. The *navi* says that in future times, the wolf and the lamb will live together in harmony. We can make this come true in a very literal



A UNIT OF POLICE OFFICERS ON HORSEBACK START OFF THE PARADE AS THE REBBE APPLAUDS THEM. THEY ARE FOLLOWED BY A DELEGATION FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY, LED BY CHAPLAIN JACOB GOLDSTEIN IN A REAL BATTLE TANK.

## Peaceful Parade

The Rebbe made special mention of the military and police presence at this parade, highlighting their part in ensuring that the parade is peaceful and without disruption.

It should be noted that just a few weeks earlier, the Rebbe delivered a *sicha* in response to active threats by the PLO, when attacks were planned on Jewish interests around the world. (See the *Leben Mitten Rebbe'n* column in last month's magazine.)

It's possible that the Rebbe was addressing the increased measures of security needed to ensure that no threats were carried out on such a large and public Jewish gathering.

sense! By doing the right thing, we push the world in the right direction, until the prophecies of the *Geulah* will be fulfilled in our time.

This will usher in a time of peace, when Hashem's kingship will be felt all over the world. There will be no need for punishments to stir the people and remind them about Hashem; the world will be filled with good.

Instead of being afraid of earthquakes, for example, we can be calm because we know that everything that happens in this world is from Hashem. The only reason why we have earthquakes every once in a while is to remind those who may have forgotten that Hashem is in charge. The earthquake serves to wake them up from this mistake. But once everyone in the world already knows that, there will be only goodness and kindness revealed throughout the world and all negativity will be annihilated.

# Family—and Family of Nations—Unity

When unity permeates the whole world, it manifests within the family unit as well. It will ensure that each and every person, Jewish or not, will have *nachas* from their children and grandchildren. People think that there must be a “gap” [the Rebbe used the English word] between children and their parents, and certainly their grandparents, who are even further removed. But the Torah says no. Hashem created the whole world, including each member of the family, and every one of them can get along with the others.

Today everyone recognizes that a philosophy of education through kindness is much more effective. We see it in the children: by showing them love instead of scaring children into obedience, we are much more successful at producing the results we want to see. This allows the children to grow up as healthy adults, with the peace of mind needed to serve Hashem properly and with joy.

This will also bring peace between nations. Recently, we have seen that even some of those countries that frequently waged wars are now changing regimes; ones with a philosophy and approach of peace and kindness.

## The Meaning of the Parade

This gathering today is a parade. Children get together, not to stay in one place, but to parade and move from one place to another, symbolizing the ever-growing quest to strive toward greater heights.

It’s true that marching in the parade are primarily Jewish children from Jewish schools. However, who leads the parade before everyone else? Members of the military, which includes both Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers. These representatives of the Federal, state, and local governments are here to ensure that the parade can be carried out in a peaceful manner, without worrying about any disruptions.

(In fact, we don’t even have to worry about rain disrupting the good mood.)

The members of the military also play musical instruments, which further creates unity between people—as we see clearly, music has the power to bring people together in joy and song.



DEVASTATION FROM THE EARTHQUAKE IN MANJIL, IRAN, SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER THE REBBE’S ADDRESS.

This is the aim of our gathering: strengthening the pursuit of peace around the world. When Hashem sees our effort in increasing peace around the world, He considers it done and brings the ultimate peace with the coming of Moshiach, when His sovereignty will be recognized around the world.

We conclude every prayer with “*Sim Shalom*”—a prayer for peace and stability. The world will not “shake;” there will be peace between people, between nations, and even between animals. There will be “wholesomeness” throughout the world.

May Moshiach come very soon. [Here the Rebbe used the English expressions] soon, sooner, and even sooner, “**immediately.**”

We will all live to see that moment. And we will thank Hashem for keeping us alive, with souls in our bodies, saying, “*Shehechyanu... Lzman hazeh!*” A time to be seen and enjoyed by everyone, all people of the world, as the *novi* says of the Beis Hamikdash, “My house is a house of prayer for all the nations...”

## Smart Children

Towards the end of his address, the Rebbe mentioned that he would like to keep it short.

“It’s a *rachmanus* to keep you here,” the Rebbe said. “You didn’t have school or yeshiva today, but we’re keeping you here for so long.”

The Rebbe explained that since we’re talking about smart children, “Chabad” children who use their *chochma*, *bina* and *daas*, even the few words will suffice for them to derive all the lessons they need to learn.



The children will take these lessons, especially the lessons from the 12 *Pessukim* and *Maamarei Chazal*, and progress from level to level. This is especially true this year—5750—which has been dubbed “Shnas Nissim”—a year of miracles, indicating a supernatural progression from level to level, until the ultimate miracle of the *Geulah*.

The Rebbe concluded with an announcement that in addition to the usual distribution of *tzedakah* to all participants, this year each child present (and in their honor, also the adults present) would receive a specially minted coin made of silver.

In the Beis Hamikdash and in its service, silver and other material goods were used to create a dwelling for Hashem. In a larger sense, the totality of our involvement in the material world should be dedicated to this purpose. This coin will serve as a memento of this occasion and inspire us to use money, and all other material objects likewise, for good purposes, and, in particular, for *tzedakah*.

Let the coin be a reminder to do everything you can to bring Moshiach sooner. May the *Geulah* come now, while we’re still giving out the coins, and perhaps even at the beginning of the distribution! And we will all go to the Beis Hamikdash, with the children at our lead, *teikef umiyad mammash!*

*The Rebbe later edited this sicha in English for wide dissemination, available today at: [chabad.org/2499844](http://chabad.org/2499844)*

1. Tehillim 104:24, Ibn Ezra.
2. The notes in this essay are based on the audio recording of the Rebbe’s talk.

## When the World Shakes

One of the interesting things the Rebbe mentioned in this *sicha* is about the meaning of earthquakes.

The reason Hashem causes the earth to shake every so often, the Rebbe explained, is to remind people who may have forgotten that Hashem is in total control of the world.

It is fascinating that even with all the testing that modern science offers, one of the only natural disasters that is still impossible to predict is an earthquake. Even if scientists can predict when a quake might happen, it still remains impossible to determine whether the earthquake will be inconsequential or a major source of destruction.

The Rebbe sees this as a clear indication that no matter how much mastery humans wish to have over the world, ultimately everything is orchestrated by Hashem.

There’s an interesting note from the Rebbe written in response to someone who asked whether he should leave the city of Tzfas, since scientists predicted that there will soon be an earthquake there:

כולם אומרים שאי אפשר לדעת כ"א (שעות או)

רגעים לפני זה. מהו שם המדען האומר אחרת?

Everyone says that it’s impossible to know until (hours or) minutes before [an earthquake occurs]. What is the name of the scientist who says differently?



It should be noted that 1990 was considered a catastrophic year for earthquake casualties. Several weeks after the Rebbe spoke on Lag B’Omer, there was a major earthquake in the cities of Manjil and Rudbar in Iran, with more than 50,000 casualties. It was the most devastating earthquake since 1976.