



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה' שיחיו

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בן הרה"ת ר' יעקב יהודה  
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו  
מאיסקי

**יהודא ליב**

בן הרה"ת לוי יצחק מאיר  
וזוגתו מרת סלאווא שיחיו  
דובאוו

**לוי יצחק**

בן הרה"ת ר' שמואל  
וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא שיחיו  
ששונקין

הוקדש ע"י זקניהם  
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער  
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
דובאוו



KOS SHEL BROCHA, TISHREI 5732.

# Transforming the Nations

SUKKOS - SIMCHAS TORAH 5731



**T**ishrei—*chodesh hachagim*, is one of the times of the year that every Chossid desires to spend with the Rebbe. Starting with the solemn *Yomim Nora'im*, and culminating with the festive days of *Z'man Simchaseinu*, this season was always abound with *giluyim*.

Beginning with the unique style of the Rosh Hashanah *maamar*, continuing with the surprise

*maamar* on Vov Tishrei, and peaking with the revelations of Sukkos and Simchas Torah, Tishrei 5731 stood out. That year, the Rebbe put a strong focus on the idea of *הללו את ה' כל גוים*, one of the two *pesukim* in the Rebbe's *kapitel* this year (5778-5779). With this in mind, we present a vivid account of that time period, based on various diaries from the time, *hanachos* of the *sichos*, and

an article written by Rabbi Michael Seligson, who was a *bochur* at the time. וזכות הרבים תלוי בו.

## CHANGE OF SCHEDULE

At the beginning of Tishrei, rumors spread that the Rebbe would not be continuing his longstanding custom of farbrenging in the sukkah on the second day of Sukkos. A year earlier, the crowds had swelled tremendously, to the point that Rabbi Y. K. Marlow broke his leg amidst all the pushing. These reports were confirmed on Motzei Yom Kippur, when the Rebbe told Rabbi Hodakov that he would not be farbrenging in the sukkah, due to the inevitable danger it entailed.

After *Mincha* the following day, several guests, along with members of the *vaad hamesader*, approached the Rebbe with the request to farbreng on Sukkos. The Rebbe explained that this was an issue of *pikuach nefesh mamosh*, and he couldn't shoulder that responsibility.

When the representatives of Kfar Chabad presented the Rebbe with *esrogim*, Reb Shmuel Chefer approached the Rebbe and reasoned: Being that “[in the times of *ikvesa d'meshicha*,] *chutzpah* is prevalent,” and “*chutzpah* is effective even toward Heaven,” would the Rebbe please farbreng on Sukkos? The Rebbe contended that as per Shulchan Aruch<sup>1</sup>, it was forbidden for him to farbreng in a dangerous place. The Rebbe continued that he follows the same Shulchan Aruch as everyone, and being that there is concern of *sakanas nefashos*, Halacha rules that a *sofek*, or even a *sfek-sfeika* (a remote possibility of danger) is *l'chumra* (we remain stringent and extra careful) and he will therefore not hold a farbrengen.

So it remained until the second night of Sukkos.

## SECOND NIGHT OF SUKKOS

When the Rebbe returned to his room after that night's *Maariv*, the key could not be found. Reb Yisroel Shemtov climbed through the window and opened the door for the Rebbe after which the Rebbe thanked him.

Rabbi Hodakov then entered the room and stayed for a few minutes. Upon exiting, he conveyed that the Rebbe would recite a *maamar* in the shul the following afternoon, at the usual farbrengen time. Not everyone heard Rabbi Hodakov's words and some initial confusion ensued. Would a farbrengen on Sukkos be taking place inside? It soon became clear that the farbrengen would indeed be taking place downstairs in the big shul. As to washing for *hamotzi* and saying *l'chaim*—the Rebbe said that this farbrengen would be “dry [אין טרוקן].”

## SECOND DAY OF SUKKOS

At 6:05 p.m., the Rebbe entered the shul and requested for the *niggun Shalosh T'nuos* to be sung. This was followed by the *maamar-niggun*, after which the Rebbe began a *maamar*, beginning with the *possuk*: “הללו את ה' כל גוים שבחוהו כל האמים.”

In this *maamar* (based on the *maamar* הללו את ה' of the Alter Rebbe), the Rebbe discussed the *chayus* that the nations of the world receive from *kedusha*, explaining that ultimately, this too, will be elevated. Quoting from the day's *haftorah* (which discusses the *goyim* being judged), the Rebbe explained its connection to Sukkos, when 70 bulls are offered, corresponding to the 70 nations of the world. The Rebbe concluded the *maamar* with special *brachos* for the coming of Moshiach.

At the *maamar's* conclusion, Chassidim realized that something unique was transpiring. The Rebbe's passionate words about the gentile kingdoms, beginning with the unique *dibur hamaschil* and concluding with *brachos* similar to those the Rebbe had said at the conclusion of the *maamarim* on Rosh Hashanah, Shabbos Shuvah, and Vov Tishrei, stood out as interesting. In addition, the entire setting of the farbrengen, and the fact that the Rebbe began right away with a *maamar*, was something unique.

After the *maamar* and *niggun simcha*, the Rebbe continued with two more *sichos*. (Initially the Rebbe had only notified that he would say a *maamar*, so this was also taken by surprise.) After elaborating





on the *hashpa'ah* the *korbanos* of 70 bulls had on the ministers of the world's 70 nations, the Rebbe revealed that this wasn't just *ruchniyusdik*, but rather it was intended to affect the current goings-on in regard to the nations' relation to the Yidden. The U.N. General Assembly, marking the institution's twenty-fifth anniversary, was taking place at that time.

The Rebbe said:

"Everything is *b'hashgacha protis*, as explained in Chassidus, but we sometimes fail to notice this. Here, however, we see that when there was a need to gather representatives from all 70 nations of the world in the U.N., it was set for *Chag HaSukkos*.

"They didn't intend for it to take place on Sukkos, and they certainly didn't calculate this twenty five years ago. However, everything is *b'hashgacha protis*, and 'Although they did not see, their *mazal* saw it.'<sup>2</sup> This gathering is taking place on Sukkos, when we read in the *haftorah*: 'And I will gather all the nations, etc.,'<sup>3</sup> and is connected

with the fact that 70 bulls were offered in the *Beis Hamikdash*, corresponding to the 70 nations."

Intimating that he had asked someone what he's doing about the current goings-on in the U.N., the Rebbe said: "Those who *bichlal* don't know what the U.N. is—*תבא עליהם ברכה* (may they be blessed). They accomplish whatever is necessary with their learning and davening. However, those who *are* familiar with the U.N. (because they read the paper religiously; obviously after davening and learning their regular *shiurim*...) should attempt to do something in this regard. Otherwise, why are they wasting their time reading the news? It's *bitul Torah!*"

Declaring that despite the nations gathering to harm the Yidden, as is written, *למה רגשו גוים*, (Why have nations gathered and [why do] kingdoms think vain things? ...Against Hashem and His anointed one...)<sup>4</sup> the Rebbe said that nothing would come of it. Ultimately, all their *hashpa'ah* is derived from their 70 *sarim*, who in turn receive it when the Yidden offer the 70 bulls on Sukkos. This means that they are subservient to *bnei Yisroel*.

The Rebbe continued that the way to combat these evils was to organize gatherings of *kedusha*, just as the members of the U.N. did the opposite. The Rebbe specified that these gatherings should take place, first and foremost, at the *Kosel Hama'aravi*, where visitors come from many diverse "nations" and "kingdoms." But in addition to the gathering at the *Kosel*, the Rebbe stressed the importance of coming together in every locale, wherever Yidden are found, and especially here [New York], where *their* gathering is taking place. The Rebbe continued that this applies even where there is only one Yid who will thereby "singlehandedly subdue that nation's *sar*."

The *sicha* concluded with the wish that through this gathering of Torah, *tefilah*, and Sukkos-related matters, it will be possible to transform the entire U.N. to good! The Rebbe specified that by fulfilling *mitzvas lulav* and influencing others to do the same, we cause the entire world to shake, because the *lulav* signifies the Yidden's victory in judgement.

The Rebbe pointed out that one of the reasons for the *farbrengen* was to reveal all of this to those assembled; especially as individuals from many "nations" and "kingdoms" had gathered to hear words of Torah from the Rebbeim and their teachers, tracing back to Moshe Rabbeinu,



including the *maamar* beginning with the words “הללו את ה' כל גוים,” which discusses the Yidden’s offering of 70 bulls and its effect on the world’s nations.

The farbrengen ended with an instruction that the *maamar* of the Alter Rebbe be studied during Sukkos, this in turn leading to “הללו את ה' כל גוים”—all nations of the world recognizing that all of their *hashpa’os* derive from the *hashpa’ah* of *benei Yisroel*.

Immediately following the farbrengen and *maariv* at Yom Tov’s end, a *hanacha* of the *sichos* was written up. After the *hanacha* of the *maamar* was submitted, the Rebbe agreed to edit it (something highly unusual in those years). Throughout Chol Hamoed, *bochurim* and *anash* continuously reviewed the *maamar*.

#### FIRST DAY OF CHOL HAMOED

Tremendous excitement was in the air. Spurred by the Rebbe’s words that the world at large is affected by our actions, it was decided that the *kinus* of Tzach that traditionally took place on

the first day of Chol Hamoed in 770 would be an “International Kinus,” with representatives from all over the world who had arrived to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe. Furthermore, the Rebbe told Rabbi Hodakov that each country’s delegate was not only its representative, but its *baal habayis*! The Rebbe also instructed that Rabbi Binyomin Gorodetzky should represent those countries without an envoy present.

And so it was. The “*baal habayis*” of Eretz Yisroel, exercising his power, ruled that the terrible decree of *Mihu Yehudi* be annulled, and that the *shtochim* not be given away to the Arabs. Following him was Russia’s representative, who proclaimed that the Yidden behind the Iron Curtain must be freed immediately, and that all who live there be able to freely practice Yiddishkeit. Several other delegates followed with similar words.

The entire gathering was taken very seriously as it was done with the Rebbe’s *kochos*, and rumor had it that the Rebbe was very pleased with what transpired. There had never been a Kinus Tzach of

the sort before and all the participants were greatly uplifted.

But if someone thought that with the heavenly affairs that the Rebbe conducted on Sukkos he had already taken care of “shaking the world” and subduing the *sarim* of *umos ha'olam*, he was in for a surprise...

#### EVE OF SHEMINI ATZERES

Upon entering *hakafos*, the Rebbe began singing his father's *hakafos niggun*, after which Shemini Atzeres *hakafos* proceeded as usual. As was customary, the Rebbe read the first round of “*Ata Hareisa*” and many people were honored with leading the *pesukim* of the subsequent rounds. After the first round, the Rebbe began<sup>5</sup> “*Ata V'chartanu*,” while the second was followed by “*Ki Elokim Yoshia Tzion*.” After the third, the Rebbe began singing “*Prazos Teshev*.”

Before *hakafos* began, the Rebbe instructed that Moshiach's Sefer Torah<sup>6</sup> be taken out from the *aron kodesh* without its crown and for the *chazan* of each *hakafa* to hold it during the *pesukim*-recital. During the dancing following the *pesukim*, it should be

returned to the *aron kodesh* until the next *hakafa*. The Rebbe oversaw this process from his place.

This was then followed by *hakafos*. As usual, the Rebbe was honored with the first and seventh *hakafos*. But just before the fourth *hakafa*, something out of the ordinary occurred: the Rebbe summoned the *gabbai*, Reb Moshe Pinchos Katz and instructed that the following be announced:

“Being that it is written “*יצב גבלת עמים למספרו בני ישראל*—He set up the boundaries of peoples according to the number of the children of Israel,”<sup>7</sup> the *ba'alei batim* of each country will now be honored. And being that everything must be done according to Torah, these will be individuals who have *smicha* or are *roshei yeshivos*. The Rebbe then instructed that each individual's name and respective country be announced.”

The representatives were as follows:

Rabbis: **Chaim Shalom Segal** - Eretz Yisroel; **Yehuda Kulasher** - Russia; **Chaim Mordechai Aizik Hodakov** - the Baltic states and Finland.

Rabbis: **Shmuel Levitin** - United States; **Yosef Goldberg** - France.

When the Rebbe announced Reb **Bentzion Shemtov** as England's envoy and someone remarked



that he's not a *rov*, the Rebbe responded that this is being done under his *achrayus*.

Rabbi **Binyomin Eliyahu Gorodetzky** - European countries that lack an envoy.

Rabbis: **Abba Pliskin** - Australia; **Hirshel Chitrik** - Brazil<sup>8</sup>; **Yitzchok Yadgar** - Iraq; **Zecharya Guri** - Yemen; **Avrohom Yitzchok Gluck** - Germany; **Yosef Wineberg**<sup>9</sup> - South Africa; **Refoel Tawil** - Argentina; **Yitzchok Hendel** - Canada; **Yehuda Leib Raskin** - Morocco; **Refoel Wilschanski** - Tunisia; **Avrohom Osdoba** - Denmark.<sup>10</sup>

Although absent from the *farbrengen* (remaining in Eretz Yisroel for Tishrei at the Rebbe's behest), Rabbi **Zalman Abelsky** was appointed *ba'al habayis* over Romania; the Rebbe later instructed that his son Yosef Yitzchok represent him (when it came time to say *l'chaim*, see below).

Reb **Moshe Pinchos Katz** represented Poland.

When the Rebbe appointed Rabbi **Shmuel Meir Silberstein** from Antwerp as the representative for Belgium, he said that he does not have *smicha*. The Rebbe responded that he should get *smicha*. [After Simchas Torah he indeed got tested on *smicha*, as the Rebbe had instructed].

Finally, the Rebbe turned to **Rashag** and said: "*Liche'ora* you once passed through Mitzrayim with the *shver* [Frierdiker Rebbe]."<sup>11</sup> When he answered affirmatively, the Rebbe appointed him the *ba'al habayis* of Egypt.

Then, after instructing that the *possuk* "יצב גבלת" ישראל לעמים למספר בני ישראל" be announced again, the Rebbe proclaimed that the delegates are the *ba'alei-batim* according to Torah.

Rabbi Michael Seligson relates:

"After this introduction, where the *olam* saw how the Rebbe is literally conquering the world from the hands of the nations and proclaiming Yiddishkeit and *kedusha* as the *ba'alei batim* over the world, the excitement among the crowd reached new heights. When the Rebbe began singing the *niggun* "*Utzu Eitza*" (this being the signal for the start of the *hakafa*), the crowd sang and danced with great intensity. It felt as if the walls of the shul were shaking!

"This *hakafa*, which will never be forgotten by those present, continued for quite a while. The Rebbe danced with tremendous *chayus* to the words of '*Utzu Eitza!*' while vigorously encouraging the singing and dancing with energetic hand-motions. The atmosphere was electrifying and it was an

awesome sight to behold, even for Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah!"

At the *seuda* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment after *hakafos*, Reb Yankel Katz from Chicago mentioned that since the Rebbe has appointed representatives for the many countries, wouldn't it be better if, instead of the U.N. making decrees that will need to be nullified by the Yidden, the representatives should be the ones to make good resolutions in the first place. "Nu," the Rebbe responded. When Reb Yankel repeated himself, the Rebbe's face became very serious. "This is not a joke," the Rebbe said. "If it were a joke, I wouldn't have asked to take out the *sifrei Torah* for it."

Reb Yankel said again that good resolutions should be made, and the Rebbe became serious again. The Rebbe quoted the Rogatchover, who says that the reason the *aron* is opened for Kol Nidrei is based on the Yerushalmi, which states that when the *aron* is open it is as if the *beis din* is sitting and judging.

Later at the *seuda*, Rashag mentioned how the Tzemach Tzedek would "make *sedorim* in Petersburg" on Rosh Hashanah, and connected Rosh Hashanah to Shemini Atzeres. The Rebbe pointed out that Rosh Hashanah and Shemini Atzeres indeed fall out on the same day of the week.

Over the rest of Yom Tov, as could be expected, an elevated feeling hovered over 770, with everyone being captivated by the previous night's heavenly events. It was in this spirit that the decision was made to hold a special gathering of all the "*rabbonim-baalei batim*." They reasoned: Being that all of them were appointed *ba'alei batim* of their respective locales, then the Rebbe is the *ba'al habayis* and leader of the entire world!

## SHEMINI ATZERES DAY

When the Rebbe arrived at 770 for *Mincha* on Shemini Atzeres afternoon, the delegates from the four largest world powers (Russia, England, France, and the United States), as well as that of Eretz Yisroel, were standing by his room. Rabbi Segal represented them all in informing the Rebbe of their resolution, namely that with the power vested in them as delegates of the various countries, they hereby appoint the Rebbe as the *ba'al habayis* of the entire world.

The Rebbe smiled when he heard this, and remarked: "You're already throwing the

*balebatishkeit* back on me? What has been accomplished thus far that it's being returned to me?"

Rabbi Segal responded by stating: Eretz Yisroel belongs to *am Yisroel*, Russian Jewry should promptly be released, and those living there should have the liberty of fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos* in a peaceful manner." The Rebbe then added: "*Mitoch harchava*—with abundance!"

The Rebbe also inquired if a *minyán* was present at the meeting.

## EVE OF SIMCHAS TORAH

*Maariv* that night was also an extraordinary experience. Upon entering the small *zal* for davening at 7:00 p.m., the Rebbe requested that a *lebediker niggun* be sung. Chassidim immediately burst into a Simchas Torah song, and it was not long before they began dancing in a circle. The surprise came, however, when the Rebbe approached the middle door of the *zal* and motioned for individuals who had arrived late to join in the dancing. Even after these Chassidim joined the dancing, the Rebbe remained near the door, waiting for more Chassidim to arrive and join.

At 8:00 p.m. the Rebbe came downstairs for the *farbrengen*. At this *farbrengen* as well, the Rebbe continued "arranging" the U.N. in a heavenly manner, stating that the nations are in a state of "רגשו, gathering," and want to seize our *tzitzis* and *tefillin*, as it says "נתקה את מוסרותינו ונשליכה ממנו" —*Let us break their bands and cast off their cords from us.*" However, Hashem will not allow this, as is written: "יושב בשמים ישחק"—the One who sits in heaven laughs."<sup>12</sup>

The Rebbe then asked, "Where are my 'Big Four?'"—referring to the representatives of the four major world powers who stood at the Rebbe's door earlier that evening.

When they approached, the Rebbe handed bottles of *mashke* to each of them to distribute amongst the crowd. (Reb Shmuel Levitin was not present, so the Rebbe appointed Reb Yisroel Jacobson as the representative for United States in his place.) The Rebbe also gave a bottle to Rabbi Segal for Eretz Yisroel, specifying that the *mashke* be distributed to the attendees who were present, and that there should be unto the Yidden אורה ויקר ושמחה וששון ויקר. The Rebbe also handed him *mezonos* to distribute in the ladies section.

The Rebbe stood up and exclaimed: "The order is that following the summit of the 'Big Four,' all the minor nations are called upon," after which he proceeded to instruct the other "*ba'alei batim*" to say *l'chaim*. After they all said *l'chaim*, the Rebbe stood up in his place and explained:

"The way it works in the U.N. is that, following the superpowers' meeting, a vote is taken amongst all the nations. If they all agree on something unanimously, then the motion passes.

"Therefore, everyone together should rule that Yisroel is *emes*; Torah is *emes*; and Hashem is *emes*. It should also be ruled that everything in the world ought to conduct itself according to Torah, and all who agree should say *l'chaim* together."

After the assembled responded with a resounding *l'chaim*, the Rebbe began singing a *freilicher niggun*, to which everyone sang along. When the singing was over, still standing, the Rebbe proclaimed:

"Common practice at the U.N. is to visit the theater after meetings and resolutions. Being that this is the widespread custom, it probably is rooted in *kedusha*. And being that here is the *le'umas zeh* of their convention, so should be done here as well.

"But being that this doesn't belong here, and we're also short on time, my suggestion is that one person make a *kuleh*, and with that we'll be '*yoitze theater*.'"

England's *ba'al habayis* Reb Bentzion Shemtov promptly made a *kuleh* as did two others, after which the Rebbe told Reb Bentzion with satisfaction: "This will cover the entire world!"

The Rebbe then asked, paraphrasing several *pesukim* in *kapitel beis*: "Why do we need all this? Why must Yidden suffer at the hands of the nations until Hashem saves us? Hashem could have accomplished all of this without any effort on our part.

"The answer," the Rebbe explained, "is that Hashem desires for us to 'ask of him,' as it says,

שאל ממני ואתנה גרים נחלתך ואחזתך אפסי ארץ—Request of Me, and I will make nations your inheritance, and the ends of the earth your possession."<sup>13</sup>

The Rebbe finished off by saying that every Yid can demand from Hashem that he be able to accomplish all this by himself. (This was all said while the Rebbe was still standing).

The Rebbe entered the shul for *hakafof* of Simchas Torah eve at 12:00 a.m., at which time



the Israeli government's traditional delegation was present. The contingent was led by Consul General Zvi Caspi, and it included Aharon Boker, a member of Israel's U.N. delegation, as well as Yosef Shufman of the Herut-Liberal Bloc. The Rebbe conversed with several of them for some time.

When asked by Reb Gershon Ber Jacobson (who was then reporting for an Israeli newspaper) what the Rebbe told them, Boker related that the Rebbe demanded of them to promise that Yerushalayim will never be given away to Arabs.

When Boker asked why the Rebbe doesn't make *aliya* to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe just smiled. When he persisted, however, the Rebbe replied that this is a question he asks himself daily.



One cannot truly know how the Rebbe was affecting the U.N. that Sukkos; what kind of "*sedorim*" were arranged in heaven on behalf of

*shleimus ha'aretz, shleimus haTorah, and shleimus Am Yisroel.*

ת אשרי עין ראתה כל אלה!

1. See Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, 156:19
2. Sanhedrin 94a
3. Zecharia 14:2
4. Tehillim 2:1-2
5. The Rebbe would always begin the *niggun* following each round of *Ata Horeisa*. See *Simchas Torah with the Rebbe*, Derher Tishrei 5778.
6. It was completed some eight months earlier. See *Sefer Torah shel Moshiach*, Derher Shevat 5776.
7. Devarim 32:8. See Rashi.
8. Rabbi Chitrik spent a number of years on shlichus in Brazil.
9. Rabbi Winberg would visit South Africa when fundraising for Tomchei Tmimim.
10. Rabbi Osdoba was a rov in Denmark for a few years.
11. En-route to Eretz Yisrael in 5689.
12. Tehillim 2:3-4
13. Further in the *kapitel*.