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Native American Chief Comes to 770 to Declare 'Hashem is One!'

BY ANASH.ORG REPORTER

PHOTOS: SHALOM ROSS/ANASH.ORG



THEY CAME TO PRAY, TO DECLARE THEIR BELIEF IN ONE G-D, AND TO SIGN A HISTORIC DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE.

Black hats are the head covering of choice in 770, of course. An occasional feather in a hat can be seen as well. A traditional Native American headdress, however, is not a sight many expect to see there.

And indeed, many heads turned when a delegation of Native American tribal leaders recently visited the Rebbe's Ohel and 770, dressed in their traditional garb. They came to pray, to declare their belief in one G-d, and to sign a historic Declaration of Solidarity with the Jewish people and fidelity to the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach.

The visit was far from being a one-time event. It was both the culmination of a years-long relationship between the leaders and a Lubavitcher chossid dedicated to spreading Sheva Mitzvos, as well as a totally new frontier from which those important messages will be spread.

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The story really begins over four decades ago, at the very same location, 770 Eastern Parkway. During many public farbrengens, the Rebbe began pushing for the dissemination of the Sheva Mitzvos, bringing the knowledge of Hashem and his

commandments to the entire world.

Yidden today live in relative peace and security, the Rebbe explained. As such, they have the opportunity, indeed, the obligation to share the message of Torah's ethics and morals to all people.

Rabbi Yossi Schulman of Kingston, PA, is no stranger to Sheva Mitzvos. For decades, he has been involved in spreading the seven mitzvos commanded to Noach after the *mabul* to varied crowds. In that capacity, he founded and leads 'Unite the World,' an organization whose stated goal is to "advance humanity to peace, kindness, and unity based on the Seven Universal Principles."

Some years ago, he was introduced by a mutual acquaintance to a young man named David Taylor, a Native American who had recently finished his U.S. Marines tour in Afghanistan. David, whose traditional name is Midegah Ogichidaa, became close friends with Yossi, who introduced

him to the Sheva Mitzvos.

As time progressed, David rose in rank in his Native American tribe, soon becoming a Chief within the Ojibwe tribe of the Anishinaabe people, one of the largest tribal populations among Native American peoples in the United States.

His new rank did not stop the relationship, and Rabbi Schulman continued to teach him about belief in Hashem, the Sheva Mitzvos, and how the Rebbe brought their message to the entire world. But now, with his friend's new position, he knew he could spread the message even further.

He came up with a bold idea: He would invite Chief Midegah to come visit Crown Heights to see 770 and the heartbeat of the Chabad community. He would also visit the Ohel of the Rebbe, whom he had heard so much about. During the Crown Heights visit, they could sign a joint proclamation declaring their belief in the one

Chief Midegah and the tribal leaders joined Rabbi Schulman on the benches in the tents near the Ohel to write their notes, before heading into the Ohel itself to pray.



WHILE RECEIVING A TOUR OF THE REBBE’S LIBRARY, THEIR NEXT STOP ON THE TRIP, A CROWD BEGAN GATHERING, AND CHIEF MIDEGAH EXPLAINED THE PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT AND SOME OF HIS TRIBE’S HISTORY TO THE FASCINATED BOCHURIM AND SHLUCHIM.

Creator and His holy laws.

Chief Midegah didn’t hesitate for a moment. Besides for all that he had learned from Rabbi Schulman, he was also now a guardian of the “Seven Grandfather Teachings” of the Anishinaabe, which he felt were profoundly aligned with the Sheva Mitzvos.

So, as shluchim began arriving in Crown Heights for the Kinus Hashluchim, another group, smaller but perhaps more noticeable, was arriving as well. Chief Midegah, along with senior tribal leaders were coming to the Rebbe.

The ‘Solidarity Event’, began Wednesday afternoon, November 8th, with a lunch and working meeting and a visit to the Rebbe’s Ohel in Queens. Chief Midegah and the tribal leaders joined Rabbi Schulman on the benches in the tents near the Ohel to write their notes, before heading into the Ohel itself to pray.

On Thursday, the group arrived in Crown Heights, where a full day program awaited them. It started with a tour of 770, where visiting shluchim and locals alike were amazed by the

unusual delegation. The group of five elders, each in their traditional dress, were shown the large zal where thousands were davening and learning, the small zal where bochurim were studying, and the Rebbe’s room, which had a profound impression on them. They also received a special tour of the WLCC broadcast room.

While receiving a tour of the Rebbe’s library, their next stop on the trip, a crowd began gathering, and Chief Midegah explained the purpose of their visit and some of his tribe’s history to the fascinated bochurim and shluchim.

Finally, the time had come to sign the historic proclamation. The elders gathered with Rabbi Schulman around the conference table in the NCFJE headquarters. There, they were joined by some prominent local representation, including Harav Yosef Braun of the Badatz, Rabbi Shea Hecht, NCFJE Chairman, Rabbi Eli Cohen, Executive Director of the CHJCC, and others.

“We meet to acknowledge understandings shared by the Midew





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Elders, Doodeman Ogemas and Ogichidaag of the Anishinaabe Ojibway People, and the Sages of the Jewish people,” the proclamation read, above sections discussing one Creator, the Universal Divine Code, and the long-awaited arrival of the Messianic era.

With deep solemnity, the elders arose, after placing some of their traditional artifacts on the table, and Chief Midegah began playing on a traditional bongo before signing the proclamation, followed by the other elders and the representatives of the Jewish community.

Rabbi Schulman concluded the meeting by distributing ARK (Acts of Random Kindness) charity boxes, an initiative that has already spread the message of charity to countless individuals around the world.

The historic day concluded with a dinner and multimedia presentation about Eretz Yisroel at the Rohr JLI Building the next door over.

“It was an honor to stand at the Ohel, light the candle, send a prayer, and

then to be at 770,” Chief Midegah told Anash.org. “I felt a heartbeat of kindness, as there in the midst of the great hall the Torah’s truth sang truth of the One Creator, who is our friend, and I was pulled to the words of the Rebbe, as I walked along his footsteps.”

“The Rebbe, my friend who is that great champion of the 7 Universal Principles, said ‘People would do well to look inward and examine what’s happening within themselves.’ And I felt called to proclaim to every person I meet the 7 Grandfather Teachings, those Universal Principles, and if we did this together, perhaps we would be one act away, one drop of water away, from the cloud bursting forth the rain of kindness to fill the earth,” he said.

“The Nov. 8-9 Solidarity Event is a historic step forward in sharing Sheva Mitzvos with the world.

The Rebbe envisioned the Geulah happening through worldwide fulfillment of Sheva Mitzvos, and I invite those who care about this



mission to partner with Unite The World in making this a reality,” Rabbi Schulman said.

May we indeed merit the day when the word of Hashem will come forth from every corner of the earth - וידע כל פעול כי אתה פעלתו ויבין כל יצור כי אתה יצרתו! א