

TO LOVE A FELLOW JEW

**The Mitzvah of
Ahavas Yisrael
in Chassidic Thought**

by
Rabbi Nissan Dovid Dubov



Sichos In English
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TO LOVE A FELLOW JEW

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

ב"ה

AT THE *FARBRENGEN* ON THE 10TH OF SHEVAT 5711 (1951), WHEN THE Rebbe officially accepted the mantle of leadership of the Lubavitch movement, he opened with the following words:

“When the Previous Rebbe came to America he said, ‘When you go to a city follow in its customs.’ Here in America, people like to hear an announcement — something new. Even better, an astonishing announcement! A statement! I don’t know if such conduct is necessary, but when in the city, do as the people in the city do.

“My statement:

“The three loves: *abavas HaShem* (love of G-d), *abavas HaTorah* (love of Torah) and *abavas Yisrael* (love of a fellow Jew) are all one. One cannot divide them, as essentially they are one.

“Chassidic philosophy quotes the Baal Shem Tov (who quotes from previous sources) the teaching, ‘An essence is indivisible. To take a part of the essence is to take the whole thing.’

“Since all three loves are one, and of the same essence, it follows that each of the three is a composite of all three loves.

“If there is *abavas HaShem* but no *abavas HaTorah* or *abavas Yisrael*, then there is something missing in *abavas HaShem*. On the other hand, if there is *abavas Yisrael*, although it is one of the intellectual *mitzvos* (i.e., the intellect necessitates such a *mitzvah*), even so, at the end of the day it will bring one to *abavas HaTorah* and *abavas HaShem*, as in the well-known story of the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek that through giving a Jew a *gemilus chessed* (an interest-free loan) he reached heights hitherto inaccessible through Torah and *avodah*.

“This is the statement that needs to be publicized:

“If one sees a Jew who has *abavas HaShem* but no *abavas HaTorah* and *abavas Yisrael*, he needs to be told that he should know that *abavas HaShem* without *abavas HaTorah* and *abavas Yisrael* will not endure. On the other hand, if one sees a Jew who has just *abavas Yisrael*, one is required to bring him to *abavas HaShem* and to *abavas HaTorah*. One also has to see to it that his *abavas Yisrael* should not only consist of feeding the starving and giving drink to the thirsty, but that his *abavas Yisrael* should lead him to bring others to *abavas HaShem* and *abavas HaTorah*.

“These three loves together form a thread that will not easily be broken; one that will bring the final Redemption. The exile was due to the opposite of *abavas Yisrael*, and through *abavas Yisrael* we will merit the final Redemption speedily in our days.”

Thus the Rebbe began his leadership with a declaration of *abavas Yisrael*, and continued throughout his leadership to demand and nurture *abavas Yisrael* throughout the Jewish world. By setting up over two thousand Chabad centers worldwide to bring Yiddishkeit to the wider Jewish community, he took *abavas Yisrael* from an abstract concept and made it a reality.

In this spirit, it is significant that in the last *sichah* heard from the Rebbe’s mouth before 27 Adar I, 5752 (1992)¹, he urged us to reach out to all our fellow chassidim and to all our fellow Jews with unconditional love and with a sense of *achdus*.

From the very beginning and throughout his leadership, the Rebbe stressed *abavas Yisrael*. This then is our task, until the clouds of *galus* finally lift, may it take place immediately. We have the Rebbe’s assurance that making this effort will disperse them.

Sichos In English

Chai Elul, 5759

1. On *Shabbos Parsbas Vayakbel*, 5752 (1992). An English adaptation of this *sichah* entitled “Togetherness: Between Individuals and Within Individuals” appears in *Sound the Great Shofar* (Kehot, NY, 1992), p. 157ff.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

NUMEROUS ARTICLES AND BOOKS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE SUBJECT of *abavas Yisrael*. Significantly, on a number of occasions, the Rebbe distributed to the chassidim copies of the *maamar Heichaltzu*, a Chassidic discourse by Rabbi Shalom Dovber Schneersohn of Lubavitch. This *maamar* has been translated into English by Sichos In English,² and is an in-depth discussion of the spiritual origins of divisiveness and dissension.

Rabbi J. I. Schochet, in his three-volume book *The Mystical Dimension: Volume III, Chassidic Dimensions*, has a section on the "Dynamics of *Abavat Yisrael*" in which he deals with the *halachic* and philosophical aspects of the subject.

In this volume, we present the reader with an adapted version of *Kuntres Abavas Yisrael*, a collection of sayings and teachings about *abavas Yisrael* first published in booklet form by Kehot Publications on the 15th of Elul 5736. Incorporated in this volume are related aphorisms, and the section on *abavas Yisrael* printed in the encyclopedia of *Chassidus, Sefer HaErechim Chabad*. Particular attention has been paid in this volume to the subject of outreach and the proper manner in which *abavas Yisrael* should be practiced towards non-observant Jews. The intention is clearly to clarify the approach of Chabad in this matter.

There is obvious overlap in content between this and previous works, but it is the hope of the publisher that the material presented in this volume in its concise form, together with copious footnotes, will be of benefit both to the scholar and the layman.

2. Second printing, SIE, the 2nd of Nissan 5756.

It is also our fervent hope that the study of the subject matter will enhance in a practical way the observance of this *mitzvah* which in turn will hasten the coming of *Mashiach*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A warm word of gratitude to Rabbi Yonah Avtzon and Yosef Yitzchok Turner of Sichos In English for their loving attention to every detail, to Ms. R. C. Schilder for editing, and to my wife and children for their constant support and encouragement in our joint *sblichus*.

Rabbi Nissan Dovid Dubov
Wimbledon UK

18th Elul 5759

Chapter 1

THE MITZVAH

Love Your Fellow as Yourself

“And you shall love your fellow as yourself.”¹

“He commanded us to love one another even as we love ourselves, and that my compassion and love for my fellow (-man) be as my compassion and love for myself with respect to his money, his person, and to whatever he possesses or desires. Whatever I wish for myself, I am to wish likewise for him; and whatever is hateful unto me or to whoever is attached to me, is likewise hateful unto me, with respect to him.” — Rambam (Maimonides)²

The commitment to help another, to give of one’s time and energy, demands an enormous amount of self-sacrifice. It is not easy to tear oneself away from personal pursuits or to break out of the insulated cocoon of one’s own interests. Even more so, the time devoted to others could be used in bettering one’s own position, be it financially, socially, etc. Even in more refined pursuits, a person is involved with his own self. The study of Torah is never-ending; the obligation to raise one’s own spiritual level is unlimited. The time given to help a fellow Jew could easily be devoted to one’s own spiritual growth. Moreover, true involvement with another demands much more than the mere sharing of time or knowledge, but an investment of a part of oneself. True devotion to a fellow Jew means his joy is your joy, his anguish your anguish, and the travails of his soul

1. *Vayikra* 19:18.

2. *Sefer HaMitzvos*, Positive *Mitzvah* No. 206. See also *Chinuch*, *Mitzvah* 243.

yours. And it is this devotion which is demanded of us when Torah commands, “You shall love your fellow as yourself.”

But man is egocentric by nature, preoccupied with his own existence. Each person is a separate entity unto himself, with his own drives, goals and nature. How then is it possible to deny one’s own identity to the extent that a separate entity assumes equal importance — to love him *as yourself*?³

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad-Lubavitch, gives the answer in his magnum opus of Chassidic philosophy, the *Tanya*. He first explains that every Jew is composed of two souls. The first is called the *nefesh habehamis*, the animal soul, and the second, the *nefesh haElohis*, the G-dly soul. As explained at length in the first 12 chapters of *Tanya*, these two souls vie for possession of the thinking mind, and depending upon which is in possession and to what extent, will

3. To love a fellow Jew as oneself is in fact the opposite of human nature (see *Hisvaadiyus 5745*, Vol. 1, p. 192). This question leads the *Ramban* (*Commentary on Vayikra* 19:17-18; see *Or HaTorah, Vayikra*, p. 106) and others to interpret the verse not in the literal sense, but rather in regard to treating another favorably (see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 17, p. 217, note 19). The *Ramban* writes: “The human heart cannot take upon itself to love another with the same love as one has for oneself. Moreover, Rabbi Akiva ruled already that, “Your life takes precedence over that of your fellow-being.” The Torah, however, commanded that one is to love another in every respect as one loves oneself ... to equate the love of both in his mind ... (as opposed to) desiring in his heart to be better off than his fellow. Scripture thus commands that such degrading jealousy should not exist in his heart, but that with regard to an abundance of good, one is to love his fellow in the same manner as one would act for oneself and not to set restrictions to love.” (Regarding the ruling of Rabbi Akiva, *Bava Metzia* 62a; Cf. *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 16; see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 10, p. 148.)

However, in ch. 32 of *Tanya*, as shall be explained, the Alter Rebbe maps out a direct and easy path through which one may interpret the verse literally.

In *Hisvaadiyus 5745*, vol. 1, pp. 192-195, the Rebbe, quoting the commentaries that say that the human heart cannot possibly love another as oneself, writes: “A person may think that to reach the level of *ahavas Yisrael* as prescribed by the Alter Rebbe in *Tanya* is certainly a very difficult *avodah*; in particular, as there are commentaries who do not interpret the verse literally. So how is it possible to reach such a level?” The Rebbe answers: “*Lechatchilah Ariber* [a phrase borrowed from the Rebbe Maharash who used to say: “When one is faced with an obstacle, the whole world will suggest that if you can’t get around it, go over it. And I say that in the first instance, go over it!”] i.e., go out of all one’s limitations and perform the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael* without making any calculations and rationalizations.

determine if the person is a *tzaddik*, one who is righteous, or a *rasha*, one who is evil.

In the celebrated chapter 32 of *Tanya*, the Alter Rebbe (as Rabbi Schneur Zalman is popularly known by chassidim) goes on to explain that since the essence of a Jew is his *nefesh baElokis*, which is described in chapter 2 of *Tanya* as being a *cheilek Elokaḥ mimaal* — literally, a “part” of G-dliness — then therefore, in their source, all souls are indeed one. Thus, according to the Chassidic perspective, the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* is the directive to focus on the essence of another Jew and see it as one with one’s own essence. To love your fellow as yourself may then be translated in its literal sense.⁴

In the words of the Alter Rebbe:⁵

“Acting on the advice mentioned above — to view one’s body with scorn and contempt, and to find joy in the joy of the soul alone — is a direct and easy path⁶ toward fulfilling the *mitzvah*, ‘You shall love your fellow as yourself,’ with regard to every Jew both great and small — in spiritual stature.

“Since his body is despised and loathsome, he will not love himself on account of his body more than he loves his fellow; and as for

4. And although the “animal soul” of the *beinoni* (the “intermediate” of *Tanya*, and most definitely those who are on a lesser level than the *beinoni*) is “the person himself” (as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 29), that is only on the external level. In truth, and on an esoteric level, every Jew, even the most simple, is prepared to give his life to sanctify the Name of G-d (*Tanya*, ch. 18), for his G-dly soul is his true being (see *Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 6 and *Kuntres U'Mayon*, ch. 47). *Abavas Yisrael* is therefore obligatory at every time and place, even though true love can only be achieved by those who make their souls primary. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 11, p. 71, note 51.

See also *Sefer HaMaamarim 5630*, p. 8, that man is created in the image of G-d, and by despising a fellow, one is despising the image of G-d. Such a thought must lead to love.

5. A commentary on *Tanya* printed by Kehot Publishing Society, Brooklyn 5753, Vol. I, pp. 421-423. (The small type indicates commentary compiled from the Rebbe’s teachings by Rabbi Rabbi Yosef Wineberg in *Lessons In Tanya*.)

6. In *avodas HaShem*, there are different paths. Some are dangerous and require great exertion and faith to follow. Here the Alter Rebbe maps out a direct and easy path down which all may go (*Sefer HaMaamarim 5705*, p. 211).

Although the path is direct and easy, every person must still invest great time, effort, and education into achieving the target. This may be done by contemplating and studying the concepts expressed in ch. 32 of *Tanya* (*Hisvaadivus 5744*, Vol. 3, p. 1894).

the soul and spirit, the differences between his own soul and that of his fellow surely will not diminish the love between them, for who can know their (the soul and spirit's) greatness and excellence in their source and root — the living G-d?

“How then can he claim that his soul is superior to his fellow's?

“Furthermore, they are actually all equal; and not only equal yet separate, but, furthermore, they all have one father — one source, and within their source they all comprise one entity.⁷

“It is on account of this common root in the One G-d that all of Israel are called ‘brothers’ — in the full sense of the word, and not only figuratively, in the sense of ‘relatives’ or ‘similar in appearance’ and the like; only the bodies are distinct from each other.

“This explains how it is at all possible to demand that one love his fellow as he loves himself. Self-love is innate, natural to man; love for one's fellow is not. How can a generated love match a natural one?

“According to the principle stated here, this is readily understood. One Jew need not create a love for another. The love is an inborn characteristic of his soul, on account of its root in G-dliness which is common to all souls; it is as natural as the love between brothers.

“Therefore there can be no true love and fraternity between those who regard their bodies as primary and their souls secondary, but only a love based on an external factor.

7. In *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 21, p. 118, the Rebbe poses the following question: If a Jew would only have to have dealings with the source of the soul of the other Jew, then it would be fair to ask him to love him with pure brotherly love. However, when it comes to another Jew, where not only is the source of his soul not fully illuminated, but on the contrary, whose soul's faintest light is obscured by the corporeality and coarseness of his body, how then is it fair to demand a brotherly love under those circumstances? The Rebbe answers: At the giving of the Torah at Sinai, the verse states: “And Israel dwelled there opposite the mountain.” The Sages comment that since the verse uses a singular expression “*vayichan*” (“and he dwelled”), it implies that at Sinai the people attained such a great state of unity that they were referred to in the singular — like one man with one heart. This unparalleled unity was only achieved at Sinai, whereas all other dwellings were amidst quarrel and strife. The uniqueness of the Giving of the Torah is that Torah has the power to bring unity to a place of disunity. The resultant unity is the greatest form of unity (comparable to the advantage of three over one — see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, p. 301, for an explanation of this concept). It is particularly in the arena of diversity where the challenge of unity is the greatest.

“Since the body separates us from each other, whereas the soul is that which binds us together, the greater value one places on his body at the expense of his soul, the more conscious he is of the differences between himself and his fellow. These differences require that he *create* a love for his fellow, and as said above, a created love can never equal a natural, innate love. Therefore love between people who consider their bodies as primarily important, must be only a love based on some external factor, in which case the love is (a) limited to the importance of the motivating factor, and (b) destined to endure only as long as that factor is valid.”

It is therefore clear that from the Chassidic perspective, the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* is to love a fellow Jew *because* he is a Jew,⁸ i.e., because he possesses a G-dly soul.⁹

This is the path to the true love of a fellow Jew. When we learn to go beyond the physical, to look past the outer concealments, the true existence of a Jew shines forth. Bodies are separate; souls are one. The physical divides; the spiritual unites. His soul is one with mine, for we all have one Father — and how can I not love my Father’s son? All differences fall away, and Jew is united with Jew, one in their source in the living G-d.

It follows that one’s love for a fellow Jew must be as great as the love for oneself, for in essence, it is one. This type of love is not based on external factors; it is a love of the Jew at its source with a love that transcends all reason.¹⁰ If at any time the concern for one’s own affairs supersedes one’s concern for another, one has not yet attained true *abavas Yisrael*.¹¹

8. See *Sefer HaSichos 5701*, p. 93. *Kovetz Lubavitch*, No. 9, p. 56.

9. In fact, this is one of the novel ideas introduced by the Baal Shem Tov. Until the times of the Baal Shem Tov, *abavas Yisrael* was a Torah imperative, and the one who studied Torah was to be loved. The Baal Shem Tov introduced the notion that the love is not dependent on Torah knowledge, but rather on the essence of the Jew, i.e., the G-dly soul (*Kovetz Lubavitch*, No. 9, p. 56).

10. This also explains the difference between *abavas Yisrael* and the love of people of any other nation, for *abavas Yisrael* is not based on any thought, emotional, or intellectual process, but is a love of the essence. See *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. 23, p. 244.

11. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 436. There the Rebbe relates a story heard from the Previous Rebbe: Once there was a great Torah sage whose child had become very ill,

One may even go so far as to say that the concern and affairs of another should be greater than one's own self concern,¹² and the pain felt for another's loss should be greater than one's own pain, G-d forbid.¹³ The reason for this is that for one's own suffering and pain, G-d forbid, one may calculate and analyze why one may be deserving of such affliction; however, when it comes to somebody else, one must always look with a favorable eye.¹⁴

In order to reach this level of *ahavas Yisrael*, contemplation is necessary; however, it is only a medium through which one can access an essential love that transcends intellect,¹⁵ a natural love (like the love of a father to a son or the love of brothers¹⁶) which is engraved upon the soul of every Jew.¹⁷ Our task is that through *avodah* (Divine service), we arouse this level of love.

The Esoteric Dimension

TWO FURTHER POINTS MAY BE ADDED WHICH CLARIFY WHY *AHAVAS YISRAEL* is an essential love rather than a love dependent on external factors:

1. Every Jew possesses a deep, hidden love for G-d.¹⁸ Since G-d loves the Jewish people, it therefore follows that there is a level of *ahavas Yisrael* that stems from one's innate love of G-d.

and his grief caused him to weep. After a while he lamented the fact that had another child been so ill he would not have cried as much as he did over his own child. This proved to him that he was still in the initial stages of *avodah*. Had his *avodah* been true, the Torah he had learned and the *mitzvos* he had performed would have revealed in him the essence of his soul, at which level all Jews are one, and he would have cried over another child as much as he did his own.

12. See *HaYom Yom*, entry for 6 Adar Rishon, p. 26; *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 157.

13. *Sefer HaMaamarim 5659; Kuntres Heichaltzu*, ch. 9.

14. Accordingly, we may therefore offer a novel interpretation into the verse. Rather than explain the verse to mean that one should love another as one loves oneself, one may explain the verse thus: that one should love oneself as much as one loves another. *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 4, p. 1410.

15. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 300.

16. *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 86.

17. *HaTamim* 4:45, *Kovetz Michtavim* printed at the back of *Obel Yosef Yitzchok Tebillim*, p. 192. *HaYom Yom*, p. 49.

18. See *Sefer HaErechim Chabad*, entry *Ahavas HaShem*.

2. It is well known that all souls are part of one larger soul, that of Adam *HaRishon*. Since as mentioned above all souls in their source are one, an essence even after it has been subdivided remains and contains the essence.¹⁹ It therefore follows that each soul contains within it all other souls.²⁰ The love of one's fellow is therefore the love of oneself.²¹

The *AriZal* writes²² that all the souls of Israel may be viewed as one large body. Just as there are 248 limbs to the body, so, too, there are souls that are the "head" of the body and souls that are the "feet" of the body. Although each soul performs its individual purpose, just as each limb of the body has a specific task, in the final analysis, they are all part of the same body.

It also follows that since all souls constitute one "body," the performance of a *mitzvah* by any one limb will be healthy for the entire body.²³

19. *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, p. 435.

20. *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 28b.

21. In the order of *avadab* (since it is impossible for them to be done both at once), one must "Adorn yourself before you adorn others" (*Bava Metzia* 107b). However, a person must sometimes start with adorning others when he sees that he has no strength to adorn himself due to the overpowering nature of the *yetzer bava* (evil inclination), in which case he starts by adorning others and then merits to adorn himself, as the Sages say (*Bava Kamma* 92a, *Rashi*, on *Vayeira* 21:1): "One who intercedes on behalf of a friend and is needy himself, is answered first." (This in addition to the fact that nowadays there is no *sefer* (order) in *avodas habirurim* (the process of elevating Divine sparks of holiness within the physical world) and one must grab what first comes to hand [see *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rashab, Vol. 1, p. 266, i.e., to adorn others before one adorns oneself].)

22. *Derech Mitzvosecha*, "Abavas Yisrael." *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 22. Similarly, the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Nedarim* 9:4 (see also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 13, p. 136) explains the negative prohibition of taking revenge using the idea that all of Israel may be viewed as one body. Just as it is impossible that one hand would punish the other for doing something wrong, so too it should be impossible for one Jew to take revenge on another.

23. *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. 23, p. 188. The Hebrew word for "congregation" is "tzibbur," which is made up of the first letters of the words *tzaddikim* (righteous), *beinonim* (intermediates) and *resha'im* (wicked). Since all Israel are considered one body, the *avadab* of the *tzaddikim* and *beinonim* has a great effect on the *resha'im* to the extent that it joins them to the congregation and eventually transforms them to the level of *tzaddikim*. *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. 4, p. 94.

This also explains why great *tzaddikim* such as the *AriZal* used to say *Vidui* (confessional prayers) even though he definitely did not commit those sins himself.

How Does One Reach Such a Level?

AS MENTIONED ABOVE IN *TANYA*, IT IS ONLY POSSIBLE TO REACH SUCH A level of *ahavas Yisrael* if one considers one's body as secondary and one's soul as primary.²⁴ A person who considers his body as primary and his soul as secondary can never have true *ahavas Yisrael*, but only a love that is dependent on an external factor — a love called in the *Ethics of the Fathers*, “a dependent love.”²⁵ Only if the body is truly viewed as secondary to the soul can there be true *ahavas Yisrael*.²⁶

Moreover, even if a person considers his soul as primary and body secondary but there remain traces of his ego,²⁷ he may still not attain true *ahavas Yisrael* until his entire ego is nullified²⁸

Since he felt himself as part of one larger body, he was confessing for the entire body. See *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. 4, p. 19.

24. One may in fact suggest that a person's *ahavas Yisrael* is an indication of how much a person is still involved with matters of the body, and in truth it reflects one's whole relationship with Torah and *mitzvos*: whether they have been fully integrated or are only superficial. (*Ahavas Yisrael in the works of Chabad*, by Rabbi Yekutiel Green, printed in Kfar Chabad 5756.)

25. *Pirkei Avos* 5:16.

26. In this respect, one may draw an analogy to the idea of circumcision of the heart. The foreskin represents the connection and immersion of a person in matters of this world. Circumcision denotes the removal of the foreskin, the disconnection from the material, and the reconnection with G-d. This same circumcision process is required to reveal the essential *ahavas Yisrael* described above. (*Or HaTorah, Chanukah*, p. 312a.)

The Tzemach Tzedek explains further that this is the deeper meaning of what Hillel said to the *ger* (proselyte) (*Shabbos* 31a): “What you do not like done to yourself do not do unto others, this is the entire Torah, the rest is explanation,” — one may ask, why did Hillel give this teaching to the *ger*, and not to all his students? The answer is that since a *ger* has not yet been circumcised and his foreskin is complete, it was necessary to emphasize the *mitzvah* of circumcision.

27. Even if this ego is generated by his success in spiritual endeavors. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1059.

28. *Ahavas Yisrael*, just like *ahavas HaShem*, is only possible when a person puts aside all feelings of self-love. When a person loves himself, there is no room for another. Furthermore, self-love leads to argument and division. Feelings of self-love can sometimes lead a person to think that everything the other person does is a personal attack against him. Well known is the story of the learned chassid who complained to the Tzemach Tzedek in *yechidus* (a private audience) that in the *Beis HaMidrash* he attended he felt that everybody walked all over him, treated him improperly, and took no notice of anything he said. The Rebbe answered that his problem was that his ego was so spread out over the entire *shul*, that wherever anybody stepped, it was on him!

and his soul is fully revealed:²⁹ only when his own soul is fully revealed is it possible then to feel an essential bond with another.³⁰ Working on one's *abavas Yisrael* actually has the effect of revealing the essence of one's own soul.³¹

Unique Qualities

IN ADDITION TO THE REVELATION OF THE ABOVEMENTIONED ESSENTIAL bond between every Jew, one must also conduct a thorough search to identify the unique qualities in every individual.³² As stated above, all souls are part of one large body which is the aggregate Jewish soul, and even souls which represent the "head" of that body are complemented by the souls which make up its "feet."³³

The Rebbe then advised him to immerse himself in "*avodab*" which would allow him to see the truth, after which he would not feel that everyone was stepping on him. This removal of ego is of course the first step in attaining true *abavas Yisrael* (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5689, p. 78).

29. In *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 438, the Rebbe explains that true *abavas Yisrael* is attained through *biskashrus* (attachment) to a Rebbe. There he explains the connection between the opening verse of the Torah "In the beginning" and the closing verse "before the eyes of all Israel" to be found in the *Parshas VeZos HaBerachab*: When a Jew fully understands "In the beginning..." i.e., that everything belongs to G-d who creates everything *ex nihilo* every second, and this knowledge humbles a person to the extent that he has no personal desires except for G-d's and as a result submits totally and connects with "*VeZos HaBerachab*," the "Moshe" in his generation (the Rebbe), then "before the eyes of all Israel" he may attain true *abavas Yisrael*.

30. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, pp. 436, 440.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 299; Vol. 3, p. 1001.

32. See *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 3, p. 426.

33. *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 22 (end); *Likkutei Torah*, *Nitzavim*; in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 18, p. 116, the Rebbe adds: Since in ch. 32 of *Tanya* the Alter Rebbe does not only write that, "they are all actually equal ... they all have one father," but precedes this concept with the words, "for who can know their greatness and excellence in their source," it follows that not only should *abavas Yisrael* be due to the fact that each soul is part of a larger body, but also because of the unique qualities of the individual soul. An analogy is like limbs in a body, that although they are separate limbs, they are separate limbs of one body, and even when focusing on one particular limb one sees it as performing a unique function necessary for the whole body.

For example, while scholars are loved for their Torah knowledge,³⁴ one can only stand back in admiration when one contemplates the pure and simplistic belief of unlearned lay people.³⁵ Each and every individual possesses qualities with which they can make a unique contribution to our nation. If one fails to see the good in another, there is something wrong in one's outlook.³⁶

Furthermore, searching for the good in others, speaking about their advantages, and praising their unique qualities actually causes those good qualities to be revealed. In addition, highlighting another's good points creates a vessel in which great Divine blessing will rest, as the Alter Rebbe once said:³⁷ "When a father looks and sees that between his children there is 'love, fraternity, peace and friendship,' and each one fills the desire of the other and worries about the well-being of the other — as if it was his own — and between them there are even those who set aside their own worries and instead care for another — then the father is delighted with his children and has much *nachas* (joy) from them and he works wonders to grant them their requests."³⁸

Great Rewards

TRUE PURSUIT OF *AHAVAS YISRAEL* BRINGS GREAT REWARDS:

34. In addition to the fact that the greater the person the greater his evil inclination (*Sukkah* 52a), and therefore the greater the admiration for a scholar who is G-d-fearing. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 2, p. 412.

35. See *Sefer HaErechim Chabad*, entry "*Anashim Pesbatim*." In the *sichab* of *Shabbos Parshas Nasso* 5720, the Rebbe quoting from the Previous Rebbe said: The concept of *ahavas Yisrael* is already stated in the Torah — the Baal Shem Tov revealed the "why," i.e., why one should love every Jew, including simple Jews, even a Jew on the other side of the world either physically or spiritually. The Baal Shem Tov explained this by revealing the true essence of every Jew. In fact, he used to send his students to learn positive character traits such as deep faith and trust from simple Jews. The Baal Shem Tov wanted *ahavas Yisrael* to be on the level of "*pnimiyus*," i.e., the inner dimension, for the inner dimension of a Jew is *Elokus*, as *ahavas Yisrael* is a vessel for *ahavas HaShem*.

36. *Sichas Chag HaShavuot* 5705.

37. *Kovetz Michtavim to Tebillim Obel Yosef Yitzchok*, Kehot, p. 199. See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5704, p. 5, in the name of the Rebbe Maharash.

38. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, pp. 46, 385.

1. When one loves a fellow Jew, G-d loves him. When one does a favor for a fellow Jew, G-d does a favor for him. When one is *mekarev* (draws near) another Jew, G-d is *mekarev* him.³⁹

“I love you, says G-d”:⁴⁰ The love of G-d for a Jew is comparable to the love for an only son born to his parents in their later years.⁴¹ As a reward for doing a favor for another — even if the favor is a material one — G-d repays the efforts made for His child many times over.⁴²

2. Through the *avodah* of having *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice) for *ahavas Yisrael*, one merits the revelation of the level of “*mab*”⁴³ in the soul, more than any other *avodah* in terms of achieving a deep perception of G-dliness.⁴⁴ Moreover, one who is void of such *mesirus nefesh* may, G-d forbid, lose his “*mab*.”⁴⁵ Only he who devotes himself to *ahavas Yisrael* with *mesirus nefesh* can be sure of maintaining his level. He himself will remain intact and will also be able to restore the spiritual losses of others.⁴⁶

39. *HaYom Yom*, p. 108.

40. *Malachi* 1:2.

41. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 3, p. 982.

42. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 1280.

43. “*Mab*” is the potential for self-negation before G-d. The word “*mab*” literally means “what,” and in this context it is borrowed from the words in *Shemos* 16:7-8: “*venachnu mah*,” (lit. “what are we?” i.e., of what importance are we, see *Rashi, ibid.*) The numerical equivalent of the word “*adam*” (man), the most sublime of the terms by which man is referred to in Scripture (see *Zohar*, Vol. 3, p. 48a) is 45, the letters of *mab*, (*mem*=40, *hei*=5). In this context, the concept of *mab* represents the very essence or spirituality of man. For man to stand in complete submission and self-negation before his Maker means that his aspect of *mab* manifests itself and dominates.

See *Sefer HaMaamarim Yiddish*, p. 212, printed in English in *Chassidic Discourses* (Kehot), Vol. 2, pp. 406/7. In that *maamar* the Previous Rebbe tells a story of how the Baal Shem Tov once took the *Chavraya Kadisha* (the holy brotherhood) to a small and poor Jewish settlement. The people in this *shtetl* had given away all they had for the redemption of a captive (*pidyon sbvuyim*) of a person who was a passing guest and whom they hardly knew. The act had been motivated out of pure *ahavas Yisrael*. The Baal Shem Tov showed them how through this great *mitzvah* they merited to reach the level of *mab* in their souls.

44. *Ibid.*, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov.

45. The Alter Rebbe in *Likkutei Torah* explains that this is the meaning of the saying in *Chagigah* 4a: “Who is a fool? He who loses what (*mab*) is given to him.”

46. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 105.

Chinuch

THE REBBE STRESSED ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS⁴⁷ THE OBLIGATION TO imbue children with a spirit of *abavas Yisrael*, stipulating that boys should associate with boys and girls with girls. Each should make sure that the other is keeping the *mitzvos*,⁴⁸ but in all cases, the spirit of *kol Yisrael chaverim*, “all Israel are friends,” should prevail.



47. See for example *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 14, pp. 281, 353. In *Likkutei Dibburim* the Previous Rebbe tells a beautiful story of how, when he was a young child of four, he asked his father the Rebbe Rashab why G-d created man with two eyes, when after all, man has only one mouth and one nose. The Rebbe Rashab asked him if he had learned the *alef-beis*. When the Previous Rebbe answered in the affirmative, the Rebbe Rashab then asked him if he knew the difference between the letter “*shin*” and the letter “*sin*.” “The letter ‘*shin*’ has the dot on the right and the letter ‘*sin*’ has the dot on the left,” replied the Previous Rebbe. The Rebbe Rashab continued, “There are things that one should look upon with the right eye and there are things that one should look upon with the left eye. Upon a *siddur* and a Jew one should look with the right eye, and upon a candy and a toy one should look with the left eye.” From that moment on, the Previous Rebbe looked upon every Jew with a favorable eye. This is *chinuch* (education)!

48. On one occasion when addressing a camp, the Rebbe suggested that each boy should make sure that the other is wearing a *tallis katan*, and if another boy does not have one, he should be given one as a present. Girls should make sure that all other girls light Shabbos candles.

Chapter 2

AHAVAS YISRAEL AND AHAVAS HASHEM: LOVING A FELLOW JEW AND LOVING G-D

The Connection Between *Abavas Yisrael* and *Abavas HaShem*

THE ZOHAR TEACHES THAT G-D, TORAH AND ISRAEL ARE ONE. IT therefore follows that the love for G-d (*abavas HaShem*), the love for Torah (*abavas HaTorah*), and *abavas Yisrael* are one.¹ Since the essence of G-d, Torah and Israel is one, and an essence is indivisible; therefore, when one grasps a part of the essence one has the whole essence.²

For this reason:

1. *Abavas Yisrael* is an indicator for *abavas HaShem*, i.e., if a person is lacking in *abavas Yisrael*, he is lacking in *abavas HaShem*,³ for one who loves the father should surely love the children.⁴

2. In *abavas Yisrael* lies *abavas HaShem*, i.e., *abavas Yisrael* is a demonstration of *abavas HaShem*. The soul of a Jew is literally

1. *Sefer HaSichos* 5700, p. 2ff.; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 499. This is, in fact, the true meaning behind Hillel's comment to the *ger* that the entire Torah is *abavas Yisrael*. In truth, the *ger*, whose intentions for conversion were sincere, was asking Hillel for a path in the service of G-d and was asking for the one key teaching. Hillel should really have answered him, "Love the L-rd your G-d." Hillel in fact taught him something deeper, that in fact *abavas Yisrael* and *abavas HaShem* are one (*Sefer HaSichos*, *ibid.*).

2. A teaching from the Baal Shem Tov quoted in the *Maamar HaShamayim Kissee* 5668 printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5666, p. 522. See also *Toldos Yaakov Yosef, Parshas Yisro*, on the *mitzvah* of "I am the L-rd your G-d." Comment of Rabbi Yaakov Emden on *Pirkei Avos* 4:2.

3. And there will be no lasting substance in his *abavas HaShem* (*Likkutei Sichos*, *ibid.*).

4. *HaYom Yom*, p. 81, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov. See also *Sefer HaSichos*, *ibid.*, p. 3; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5710, p. 105.

a “part of the Divine”⁵ as explained above in *Tanya*, chapter 32, and therefore when one loves the Divine within the Jew, that is actually *abavas HaShem*.⁶

3. *Abavas Yisrael* is the vessel for *abavas HaShem*.⁷ Through practicing *abavas Yisrael*, one will eventually come to *abavas HaShem* and *abavas HaTorah*. One who works on his *abavas Yisrael* will reach great heights in his *abavas HaShem*.⁸

When one sees a Jew who only has *abavas Yisrael*, one must see to it that: 1. he must also be brought to *abavas HaShem* and *abavas HaTorah*, and 2. his *abavas Yisrael* should not only extend to feeding the needy, but should lead him to bring other Jews to *abavas HaShem* and *abavas HaTorah*.⁹

Between the three loves, *abavas HaShem*, *abavas HaTorah* and *abavas Yisrael*, *abavas Yisrael* is the greatest, for if one possesses true *abavas Yisrael*, one automatically has *abavas HaShem* and *abavas HaTorah*. One who has *abavas HaShem* does not necessarily have *abavas HaTorah*, and one who has *abavas HaTorah* does not necessarily have *abavas Yisrael*.¹⁰

Abavas Yisrael is greater than *abavas HaShem* as the verse¹¹ itself testifies, “I love you, says G-d.” Therefore when one has *abavas Yisrael*, one loves that which the beloved G-d loves.¹²

Furthermore, the three loves correspond to the three pillars upon which the world stands:¹³ *Abavas Yisrael* corresponds to

5. *Tanya*, ch. 2.

6. *HaYom Yom*, p. 78, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov.

7. *HaYom Yom*, p. 93. See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5700, p. 3; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, p. 498; *HaTamim*, vol. 4, p. 45.

8. There are also many Jews who are rich in the knowledge of Torah but who are lacking in *yiras Shamayim* (fear of Heaven). Even though the Torah they learn has failed to imbue them with a spirit of *yiras Shamayim*; nevertheless, through *abavas Yisrael* which stems from the essence of the soul, one will arouse one’s own essence to *yiras Shamayim* (*Sichab* of the 12th of Tammuz 5723).

9. *Likkutei Sichos*, *ibid*.

10. *Sichab* of *Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo* 5705, printed in *Kovetz Lubavitch*, Vol. 9, p. 57. See Introduction to this book.

11. *Malachi* 1:2.

12. *HaYom Yom*, p. 49. In *Sefer HaSichos* 5702, p. 12, it is written that G-d overlooks our lack of *abavas HaShem* in favor of our *abavas Yisrael*. See *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 3, pp. 425, 437.

acts of kindness, *abavas HaTorah* to Torah, and *abavas HaShem* to *avodah*.¹⁴

A further comparison may be drawn from *abavas HaShem* to *abavas Yisrael*: The Sages¹⁵ comment on the verse¹⁶ “And you shall love the L-rd your G-d,” that the imperative to love, *ve’ahavta*, suggests also that the *name* of the L-rd your G-d should become beloved through you, i.e., that others will come to love G-d through your actions. The same may be applied to *abavas Yisrael*, i.e., that one’s *abavas Yisrael* should be in such a way that one’s friend becomes beloved through you.¹⁷

The Resting of the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*)

WHEN THERE IS UNITY AMONG THE JEWISH PEOPLE:

1. the *Shechinah* rests with them.¹⁸ When there is fragmentation,¹⁹ the *Shechinah* removes itself for it cannot rest in an incomplete place.²⁰

13. *Pirkei Avos* 1:2.

14. Extracted from a letter of the Rebbe, Adar 5723.

15. *Yoma* 86a.

16. *Devarim* 6:5.

17. *Sichab* of the Seventh Day of Pesach, 5705.

18. This is termed in the *Kabbalah* the *Yichud* of *Kudsha Brich Hu* and His *Shechinah*, for the *Shechinah* is the source of the souls of Israel. See *Tanya*, ch. 32; *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 29a; *Or HaTorah, Chanukah*, p. 312b. The Tzemach Tzedek in *Or HaTorah (ibid.)* explains the *mishneh* in *Pirkei Avos* 5:10; “What is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours — this is the *am haaretz*” (see text *ibid.*) to mean: The words “*am haaretz*” can literally be translated as a “person of the land,” i.e., attached to the physical. *Abavas Yisrael* demands an elevation of the soul over the body, and one whose body is primary and who therefore says “What is mine is mine” is an *am haaretz*.

19. This is the inner meaning of the saying, “Your departure is difficult for Me” quoted in the commentary of Rashi, *Parshas Emor* 23:36, for grammatically it should have read, “Our departure (from each other).” The meaning is that when Israel are together, G-d is with them; however, when there is fragmentation and they depart from each other, this is “difficult” for G-d, as this causes the *Shechinah* to depart from them. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 433.

20. *Zohar*, Vol. 3, p. 90b.

2. G-d does not look at the people's misdeeds.²¹ The reason for this is that when Jews are together, the *Shechinah* rests between them, and the *Shechinah* itself does not wish to see its own defect. However when there is hatred among Jews (G-d forbid), there is a separation between the *Shechinah* and Israel, which causes G-d to see the misdeeds of Israel in general, and in particular, the misdeeds of the individual who is the source of the hatred.²²

3. G-d fulfills the people's requests and listens to their prayers and supplications. The people of Israel are the children of G-d, and when the Father sees the children living with each other in a spirit of mutual love and care, each one putting aside his own worries in order to calm and offset the worries and needs of the other, then the Father takes great pleasure from his children and He works wonders to fulfill their requests.²³

In this vein:

1. The blessings that are received and given at a *Chassidische farbrengen* — a gathering in the true spirit of *ahavas Yisrael* — can arouse G-d's mercy even more than the angel Michael can arouse on behalf of the Jewish people.²⁴

21. He does see them but they are ignored, as it says in the verse (*Bamidbar* 23:21): "He does not look at iniquity in Yaakov."

22. *Derech Mitzvosecha*, *ibid.*

23. *Kovetz Michtavim* printed at the back of the *Tebillim Yosef Yitzchok* (Kehot), p. 199, in the name of the Alter Rebbe. See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5700, p. 157.

24. *Kovetz Michtavim*, *ibid.*; *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 3, p. 412; *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, p. 564b in the name of the Baal Shem Tov. In that letter the Previous Rebbe relates a story heard from Reb Hillel of Paritch who heard the story from Reb Zalman Zezmer: Once, the chassidim of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk were having a *farbrengen* and they were repeating some of the Torah they had heard from the Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezeritch. The Alter Rebbe was also there at the *farbrengen*. After they had repeated the teaching three times, they continued to *farbreng* and drink *mashkeh* (liquor). In the middle of the *farbrengen*, one of the chassidim who suffered from an illness for which the doctors could not find any cure, stood up, and with tears in his eyes requested a blessing from the other chassidim for a "*refuah sbleimab*" (a speedy recovery). After hearing his request, a number of the chassidim started to laugh at him. "Do you think we have the power to give a blessing?" some said. Others accused him of putting his faith in simple folk when the power to bless has only been invested in righteous individuals. The chassid, however, was unperturbed and continued to request a blessing. He then broke down in tears and to calm him down

2. When a Jew sighs over the troubles of another, that sigh has the power to break through partitions of steel which may be in heaven created by accusing angels, and conversely, the joy which one Jew expresses when he hears of the *simchah* of another and the blessing he gives him is accepted by G-d as much as the prayer of Rabbi Yochanan the High Priest when he entered the Holy of Holies.²⁵



somebody began to sing. The Alter Rebbe stood up and announced, “*Sha! Sha!*” All went quiet and even the chassid stopped crying. “My brothers and friends,” said the Alter Rebbe, “have you forgotten the saying that fell from heaven to the holy fraternity of the Maggid of Mezeritch, that a *Chassidishe farbrengen* can achieve even more than the angel Michael?” Immediately, the entire company was set afire with these words and they all blessed the chassid with a *refuah sbleimab*.

Reb Zalman related further to Reb Hillel that the idea that a *Chassidishe farbrengen* can achieve more than the angel Michael was once explained by the Alter Rebbe with the following parable: The way of small children is that they want to keep a good thing for themselves and not share it with others. They are particular with what is theirs and they are naturally jealous of what belongs to their friends. Then there are children who look unfavorably at others, get angry with them, and possess bad character traits. From such children, a father has much pain. Therefore when a father wants to educate his children, he searches for a good teacher. After a while with the teacher, the father investigates the conduct of the children. He sees that the children are at peace with each other, love each other, and worry about each other, sometimes even more than themselves. Upon seeing this, the father has tremendous *nachas* (joy) from his children and will work wonders to fulfill the requests of the children, not to mention the reward he will give the teacher. Reb Zalman then said to Reb Hillel, “A blessing given by chassidim can arouse more mercy than an arousal of mercy by the angel Michael.” Reb Hillel then added his own interpretation of this idea: In addition to the fact that the blessing of chassidim at a *farbrengen* can have a physical effect in the three areas of children, health and livelihood — even more than the angel Michael — the *Chassidishe farbrengen* has a tremendous spiritual effect on the life and conduct of one’s children. The delight G-d has from this is supreme!

The Previous Rebbe also explains there in *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, p. 1129, that the souls of Israel are in fact on a greater level than those of the angels. See also *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 2, p. 119.

25. *Sefer HaSichos 5703*, p. 161, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov.

LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF. (*Vayikra* 19:18)

RABBI AKIVA SAID: "THIS IS A GREAT PRINCIPLE OF THE TORAH."
(*Sifra, Vayikra* 19)

IT IS A *MITZVAH* FOR EVERY PERSON TO LOVE EVERY INDIVIDUAL OF ISRAEL AS HE LOVES HIS OWN SELF, AS IT IS WRITTEN: "LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF." HENCE, ONE MUST SPEAK FAVORABLY OF ANOTHER AND BE CONSIDERATE OF HIS POSSESSIONS AS HE IS CONCERNED FOR HIS OWN POSSESSIONS AND IS ZEALOUS OF HIS OWN HONOR.
(Rambam, *Hilchos Dei'os* 6:3)

BEFORE PRAYER IT IS PROPER TO SAY, "I TAKE UPON MYSELF THE POSITIVE COMMANDMENT OF 'LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF.'"
(Alter Rebbe, *Siddur Tebillat HaShem*, p. 12)

THE BAAL SHEM TOV SAID THAT *AHAVAS YISRAEL* IS THE FIRST PORTAL THAT LEADS INTO THE COURT OF G-D.
(*Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 2, p. 412)

THE MAGGID OF MEZERITICH SAID: THE REBBE THE BAAL SHEM TOV FREQUENTLY OBSERVED THAT LOVE OF ISRAEL IS LOVE OF G-D. "YOU ARE CHILDREN OF THE L-RD YOUR G-D," (*DEVARIM* 14:1); ONE WHO LOVES THE FATHER LOVES THE CHILDREN.
(*HaYom Yom*, p. 81)

THE ALTER REBBE TOLD HIS SON THE MITTELER REBBE: "MY 'GRANDFATHER' (THE BAAL SHEM TOV) SAID THAT ONE MUST PRACTICE SELF-SACRIFICE FOR *AHAVAS YISRAEL*, EVEN TOWARD A PERSON ONE HAS NEVER SEEN." (*HaYom Yom*, p. 113)

R. ELIMELECH RELATED WHAT HE HAD HEARD FROM THE MAGGID, "DO YOU KNOW, MELECH, WHAT THEY SAY IN THE *MESIVTA* IN HEAVEN? *AHAVAS YISRAEL* MEANS LOVING THE ABSOLUTELY WICKED LIKE THE PERFECTLY SAINTLY." (*Sefer HaSichos* 5700, p. 117)

ACCUSTOM YOURSELF TO INSTILL A LOVE OF HUMANS IN YOUR HEART, EVEN THE WICKED, AS THOUGH THEY ARE YOUR BROTHERS, AND EVEN MORE, TO THE POINT THAT LOVE OF ALL HUMANITY WILL BE IMPLANTED IN YOUR HEART, TO LOVE EVEN THE WICKED IN YOUR HEART. SAY: "IF ONLY THESE RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE WOULD REPENT! THEY WOULD ALL BE GREAT AND ACCEPTABLE TO G-D." MOSHE *RABBEINU*, WHO LOVED ALL ISRAEL FAITHFULLY, DECLARED: IF ONLY *ALL* G-D'S PEOPLE WERE PROPHETS....
(R. Moshe Cordovero, *Tomar Devorah*, ch. 2)

THE ALTER REBBE QUOTING THE MAGGID IN THE NAME OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV: *AHAVAS YISRAEL* MEANS CHERISHING ANOTHER WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION, WHETHER THE OTHER IS LEARNED OR SIMPLE. IT IS TO BE A LOVE OF BROTHERS, EXPRESSED IN EMBRACE, MANIFESTING ITSELF IN OSCULATION, JUST AS LOVE OF TORAH IS EXPRESSED IN THE WAY A *SEFER TORAH* COVER IS TREASURED.
(*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5708, p. 192)

Chapter 3

ACHDUS YISRAEL: JEWISH UNITY

Abavas Yisrael and Achdus Yisrael

AHAVAS YISRAEL IS THE TERM USED TO DESCRIBE THE COMMANDMENT TO love a fellow Jew. Implied is that there are two separate entities, the lover and the beloved, and the imperative is that the intensity of the love between them should be on the level of “as you love yourself.”

Achdus Yisrael is the term used to describe the reason why one Jew can truly love another “as yourself,” because in essence, they are one.¹

The *Talmud Yerushalmi*² explains the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* with a parable: If a man were to cut a piece of meat with a knife and by mistake the knife cut his hand, would one imagine that one hand would hit the other to reprimand it? So too, in *abavas Yisrael*, each Jew must view the other as part of the same body.³ Living with a day-to-day awareness that all

1. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 31, p. 72. See also *Hisvaadiyus 5744*, Vol. 2, p. 663.

2. *Nedarim* 9:5.

3. In *Tanya*, ch. 32, the Alter Rebbe quotes the rationale for *abavas Yisrael* to be: “For they are all equal and they have one father. It is on account of this common root in the One G-d that all of Israel are called ‘brothers’ — in the full sense of the word, only the bodies are distinct from each other.” Why doesn’t the Alter Rebbe quote the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, which superficially demonstrates, with the parable of one hand hitting the other, a deeper dimension in unity, i.e., that all Israel is like one body? (The fact that all souls have one father shows that their *father* is one, but the Jews are in fact separate from each other, although they are brothers — and albeit that brothers have an essential bond, they are still separate people, whereas if Israel is described as one body, they don’t even have the differences as between brothers.) In truth, however, the level of *achdus* based on the fact that all Israel are equal because of their source in the One G-d is a greater level of *achdus* than when they are considered as one body. In one body, where the right hand and the left hand consider themselves part of the same body and would never strike each other, there nevertheless remains divisions and differences

Jews are limbs of the same body is the true fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael*.⁴

We All Need One Another

EVERY JEW POSSESSES TWO DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:⁵

1. A feature that he shares with all other Jews, i.e., that he has a Jewish soul which, in essence, is one with all other souls.

2. His own distinct character, as it is written, “[from] your heads ... to your water carriers.”⁶ Everyone possesses a quality unique to him alone.⁷ Our recognition of one another’s individual contributions and qualities is vital to achieve unity among us, and each person must understand that he is not perfect without the other. A Jew must feel like “half a shekel,” his other half being every other Jew.⁸

True *achdus Yisrael* is achieved when these two dimensions are fused.⁹ Each individual must view his own distinguishing features as part of an entire body which has multiple distinguishing features.¹⁰ And therefore, each soul shares in the individual characters of all other souls, because all souls have their source in the same essence.

between the limbs. For example, the head is not on the same level as the foot, etc. Whereas regarding the level of unity based on all souls having one source in the one G-d: just as G-d is One without any division whatsoever, so too, in essence, all souls which are a “part of G-d” are in fact an indivisible unity — one in all aspects (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 31, p. 73). The Rebbe goes on to explain how these two levels of *achdus* are achieved through attaching oneself to *talmidei chachomim*, and the higher level of *achdus* is achieved through attachment to the Moshe of the generation who embodies the total unity of the Jewish people.

4. *Hisvaaduyus* 5743, Vol. 1, p. 48.

5. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 56.

6. *Nitzavim* 29:9-10.

7. *Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim*.

8. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 30, p. 189.

9. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 31, p. 217, how this was achieved in the donations made to the *Mishkan*. See also *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 160; Vol. 4, p. 1142.

10. See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, pp. 57-8. See also *ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 152 which discusses the difference between Divine Providence of the nations and of Israel because of the fact that each individual is part of the whole of Israel which is the purpose of creation.

An analogy may be drawn from a *Sefer Torah*. In a *Sefer Torah*, each letter has its individual characteristics. Each letter must be completely surrounded by blank parchment and no two letters may be touching. However, even if just one letter is missing, the entire *Sefer Torah* is rendered invalid. Israel is thus compared to a *Sefer Torah* — the word *Yisrael* is an acronym for “There are six hundred thousand letters in the Torah.”¹¹

To Do Your Will

IN THE ROSH HASHANAH PRAYERS¹² WE SAY, “AND SO, L-RD OUR G-D, instill fear of You upon all that You have made, and dread of You upon all that You have created; and then all works will be in awe of You, all the created beings will prostrate themselves before You, and they will all form a single band to carry out Your will with a perfect heart.”

The meaning of this prayer is that only when the created beings get together to do G-d’s will can there be a “single band.” If, however, the purpose of the band is not to do G-d’s will, then it will not be a single band.

The reason:

1. People, by nature, are different from one another. When they come together for any purpose, they join forces with only those soul powers necessary for the joint venture; they do not invest all their soul powers and they certainly do not invest their essence.

2. Even in their joint venture, each participant is doing what suits his ego and his feelings. It just so happens that in this particular area, all happen to be doing the same thing.¹³

3. The joint venture will only be of a temporary nature, for since each participant has only invested certain soul powers,

11. *Megaleh Amukos* 186.

12. *Maabzor for Rosh Hashanab*, Kehot, p. 147.

13. This is the meaning of the expression in *Pirkei Avos* 5:17: “the argument of Korach and his following,” i.e., although Korach and his following joined together for a common cause (to contest the leadership of Moshe), in their own ranks, they were deeply divided.

when the venture no longer suits him, he will pull out and the group will disband. This has been seen time and time again with many groups whose beginnings looked promising but did not withstand the test of time.

When, however, the foundation of any gathering is Torah and *mitzvos*, the result will be everlasting, for in such a case, each participant invests *all* his soul powers. On the soul level, every Jew wishes to do that which G-d wants him to do. True *achdus Yisrael* can only be forged when the aim is to fulfill the will of G-d.¹⁴

Unity and Peace in the World

ON THE VERY FIRST WORD IN GENESIS, “*BEREISHIS*,” *RASHI* COMMENTS THAT the world was created for two things: for Israel and for the Torah. Since Israel is the purpose in creation, the unity amongst Israel will also cause a unity in the entire world, bringing the entire world to the recognition of the One G-d.¹⁵

“If you shall walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them ... I shall give peace in the land.”¹⁶ Peace in the land is granted by G-d with the condition that we walk in His statutes. Since *ahavas Yisrael* is the great principle of the Torah, it follows that if there is peace amongst Jews, this will bring peace to the entire world, and in particular, peace to the Land of Israel.¹⁷

The vessel for G-d’s blessings is peace.¹⁸ In our daily prayers¹⁹ we say, “Bless us our Father, all of us as one, with the light of Your countenance.” When will G-d bless us? When we are one.²⁰ The *Midrash* compares us to sticks. Each stick by

14. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 436.

15. *Hisvaadiyus 5743*, Vol. 1, p. 50.

16. *Vayikra* 26:3-6.

17. *Hisvaadiyus 5743*, Vol. 3, p. 1486.

18. *Mishnah, Uktzin* (end).

19. In the last blessing of the *Shemonah Esreh*.

20. *Tanya*, ch. 32. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, pp. 641-2; Vol. 24, pp. 271, 280.

itself is easily snapped; however, when they are bound together they are not so easily broken.²¹

United in a *Sefer Torah*

IN THE YEAR 5742, THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE PROPOSED THAT ALL JEWS unite through the writing of a *Sefer Torah*.²²

Torah is one: indivisible and eternal. A *Sefer Torah* comprises many thousands of letters, each separate and distinct from another. Yet a *Sefer Torah* is valid only when all the letters are present and combine to form one *Sefer Torah*. Should even one letter be missing or imperfect, the entire *Sefer Torah* is rendered invalid. This is true unity.

There are 600,000 letters in a *Sefer Torah*. There are 600,000 all-encompassing souls from which the souls of all Jews derive. These foundational souls correspond to the letters in the Torah. A missing letter invalidates a Torah scroll; a “missing” Jew renders our people imperfect. Torah unites the letters; they are not separate and unrelated, but part of a larger unity. Torah unites Israel; we are not unrelated, separate individuals when Torah brings us together.

Unity Through Learning *Rambam*

IN ORDER TO HASTEN THE FINAL REDEMPTION, IT IS NECESSARY TO SEARCH for different ways to unite the Jewish people. One of the ways to do this is to unite Jews through learning the same subject in Torah. This has two advantages:

21. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 32, p.153, note 40, that even if the spiritual climate is not so great, if peace prevails among the Jews, wars may be won. This was also true in the time of Ahab, as the *Midrash* states that when Ahab went out to war, he won even though the Jews at that time were idolators, whereas when King David went out to war, he did not always win because there was a lack of peace within his ranks. See *Sefer HaLikkutim*, entry “*Achdus*.”

22. Regarding the campaign to have all Jews purchase a letter in a *Sefer Torah* and thereby unite all Jews, see *Sichos In English*, Vol. 11, p. 241ff.; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 24, p. 583; Vol. 20, p. 567. The Rebbe also stressed that a special *Sefer Torah* be written for children (see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 295; S.I.E., essay entitled *A Sefer Torah for Children*).

1. The Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya*²³ that when a Jew learns Torah, “he has comprehended with his intellect the Will and Wisdom of G-d ... and this is a wonderful unity, the likes of which there is none other.” When many Jews learn the same subject in Torah, they are all unified in this “wonderful unity.”

2. Although no two minds are alike and people have different opinions, when people learn the same subject in Torah together, they delve into and discuss the issue which brings about and develops strong ties between them.²⁴

Since the *Zohar* states that a Jew connects with G-d through the Torah, it therefore follows that a true connection is forged when Jews learn the Torah in its entirety. This is certainly achieved in the learning of the *Mishneh Torah* of the *Rambam* in which he gathers and codifies the entire Oral Torah²⁵ in *halachic* form. The learning of *Rambam*, in addition to gaining knowledge of the Torah in its entirety, is an excellent way of uniting the Jewish people and thereby hastening the *Geulah*.²⁶



23. Ch. 5.

24. See *Kiddushin* 30b.

25. See Introduction to *Mishneh Torah*.

26. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 32, pp. 271-277.

Chapter 4

A WAY OF LIFE

The Foundation of the Entire Torah

AHAVAS YISRAEL IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE ENTIRE TORAH.¹ IT THEREFORE follows that one should never be lenient in this *mitzvah*, for in so doing, it would lead to leniencies in other *mitzvos*.² Therefore, as the foundation of all *mitzvos*, *ahavas Yisrael* should be observed with great strength.³

A number of reasons are given as to the pivotal nature of this *mitzvah*:

1. The foundation and root of the whole Torah is based on the principle of “elevating the soul over the body.” Only one who truly views the soul as primary and the body as secondary can properly observe the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael*.⁴

1. *Shabbos* 31a; *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Nedarim* 9:4.

2. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 321.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 128.

The Torah instructs us not to add or detract from the detail of any *mitzvah*. How much more so is this applicable in the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael*.

It could be that out of love, one could overstep the limit and help somebody to sin, G-d forbid, in particular to do a “light” sin. Or it could be that when there comes a time that one is obligated to rebuke, in particular a child (be it in years or knowledge of Judaism), one will refrain because of misplaced love. In this case, the Torah says, “Do not add,” i.e., one must rebuke.

Conversely, one may start to rebuke loudly and in public with insults, etc. Says the Torah, “Do not detract,” i.e., first rebuke quietly and in private with soft words, and only if one has failed can one rebuke publicly using the guidelines set out in *Shulchan Aruch* (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 24, p. 602). See also *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5710, p. 243, that *ahavas Yisrael* should not lead a person to be blind to the faults of others, rather, the rebuke must be given in a way of *kiruv*. One should first search for the fault in oneself and then rebuke oneself loudly so that when the other hears, he too will be aroused to repent for his sin.

4. *Tanya*, ch. 32. See also *Or HaTorah*, *Chanukah*, p. 312b.

2. The foundation and root of the Torah is based on the principle of drawing down the light of the *Ein Sof* (the infinite light of G-d) into “*Knesses Yisrael*,” i.e., the collective entity comprising all the souls of Israel,⁵ and this is achieved through *ahavas Yisrael*.⁶

The fundamental nature of *ahavas Yisrael* is demonstrated in the Talmudic⁷ story of the proselyte who approached Hillel and requested that Hillel teach him the entire Torah while the proselyte stood on one foot,⁸ to which Hillel replied, “What you do not like done unto yourself, do not do unto others — this is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary.”

The meaning behind Hillel’s statement was:

1. The goal of all *mitzvos* is to reach the level of transcending the attachment to the material nature of this world and to be totally absorbed in the unity of G-d. This, as stated above, is the essential nature of *ahavas Yisrael*.

2. Every *mitzvah* draws Divine light into the world. This diffusion of the light of the *Ein Sof* is typified by the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael* and it therefore exemplifies the nature of all *mitzvos*. The basis of each *mitzvah* can therefore be explained by examining the nature of the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael*.⁹

5. What was described in ch. 2, footnote 18, as the unity of *Kudsha Brich Hu* and His *Shechinah*.

6. *Tanya*, ch. 32; *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 29a. A further reason why *ahavas Yisrael* is so fundamental is that according to *Kabbalah*, the root of the Torah is from the world of “*Tikkun*” where everything is blended and interdependent (as opposed to the world of “*Tohu*” where everything is independent) and this interdependency is reflected in *ahavas Yisrael*. See *Toras Chaim*, *Noach*, p. 72b; *Or HaTorah*, *ibid*.

7. *Shabbos* 31a. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 16 as to why Hillel phrased his words in the negative rather than issuing a positive directive.

8. See *Or HaTorah Chanukah*, p.313a, for a Kabbalistic explanation as to why the *ger* stood on one foot.

9. *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 29b. Furthermore, as explained above in footnote 6, *ahavas Yisrael* demonstrates clearly the world of *Tikkun* whereas each *mitzvah* is a detail in the general *tikkun* — see *Toras Chaim*, *ibid*.

The Chassidic Way of Life

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHASSIDIC WAY OF LIFE IS *AHAVAS YISRAEL*.¹⁰ The founder of the Chassidic movement, the Baal Shem Tov, had unlimited *ahavas Yisrael*¹¹ for all Jews. In the first years of the Baal Shem Tov's leadership, he called his students "beloved ones," and because of this, his *opponents* dubbed them "chassidim."¹² Before the Baal Shem Tov revealed himself, he served as an aide in a *cheder*, taking the children to and from school. About him the Maggid of Mezeritch once remarked: I wish that I would be able to kiss a *Sefer Torah* with the same love with which the Baal Shem Tov kissed a child when the child said the *aleph-beis*.¹³

In his *Tanya*, the classic work known as the written law of *Chabad* philosophy, the Alter Rebbe¹⁴ dedicates chapter 32¹⁵ to

10. *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, p. 770, 1125. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 535. See *Sefer HaSichos 5705*, p. 39, that true *ahavas Yisrael* is to be found among chassidim.

11. The Previous Rebbe writes in *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, *ibid.*: "When the Baal Shem Tov was five years old, he was orphaned by the passing of his father, the *gaon* and *tzaddik*, R. Eliezer. On his deathbed, his father instructed the Baal Shem Tov: 'My son, do not fear anyone or anything; only *HaShem*. Love every Jew from the depth of your heart and with the fire of your soul without any differentiation of who or what he is.'" In this short last will and testimony, the Baal Shem Tov's father showed him the path on which he would embark for the rest of his life. The two ideals, fear of Heaven and *ahavas Yisrael*, were to become the two "Tablets of Stone" of his life. The twin lights of "I set *HaShem* continually before me" and *ahavas Yisrael* would burn in him continuously.

For more material concerning the great *ahavas Yisrael* of the Baal Shem Tov, see *Sefer HaSichos 5703*, p. 151.

See also *Maamarim 5748*, pp. 229-230 regarding the added dimension of *ahavas Yisrael* by a *Nassi*.

12. *Sefer HaMaamarim 5710*, p. 86.

13. *Sefer HaMaamarim 5709*, p. 87. See *HaYom Yom*, the 16th of Tammuz: "The Maggid said: 'If only we would kiss a *Sefer Torah* with the same love that my Master kissed the children when he took them to *cheder* as a teacher's assistant.'"

14. See *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 9, p. 161, where it states that the Alter Rebbe received from the Maggid the teaching that one must love a Jew because he is a Jew.

See *Sefer HaMaamarim 5707*, p. 256, where the Previous Rebbe writes that he heard from his father the Rebbe Rashab a tradition passed down from Rebbe to Rebbe that when the Alter Rebbe was in Mezeritch, the Maggid revealed to him who the Alter Rebbe was: that he had a new soul from the world of *Atzilus* which had enclothed itself in a revealed manner in a body. The *avodah* of this soul was to reveal and explain the

the subject of *abavas Yisrael*. Since the numerical equivalent of the Hebrew word “*lev*” (“heart”) is 32,¹⁶ this suggests that the “heart” of *Tanya*, and, in fact, the heart of Chassidic life, is *abavas Yisrael*.¹⁷

Torah of the Baal Shem Tov, as regards *abavas HaShem* and *abavas Yisrael* and also to reveal *Chassidus* Chabad. The Maggid also instructed the Alter Rebbe in the name of the Baal Shem Tov to draw the simple folk nearer to *Yiddishkeit*, for one needs to love a Jew because he is a Jew. See also *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 8, p. 110: “The Alter Rebbe said that the *AriZal* merited to see Eliyahu and to have *ruach hakodesh* due to the great *simchah* he had when doing a *mitzvab*, and the Baal Shem Tov merited the revelation of Eliyahu and *ruach hakodesh* through joy in *abavas Yisrael*. The Alter Rebbe took the Baal Shem Tov’s *abavas Yisrael* and planted it in all *Chassidishe* hearts, not only in thought or speech, but in action — true *Chassidishe abavas Yisrael*.”

See also *Sefer HaToldos* of the Alter Rebbe, Vol. 1, p. 127, that on his first visit to Mezeritch he heard a teaching from the Maggid in the name of the Baal Shem Tov: “The cloud of the *ketores* of Yom Kippur becomes the *schach* (foliage covering) of the *sukkab*, whose spiritual content is, “I love you, says the L-rd.” From that moment on, the conduct of the Alter Rebbe changed. Until then he had remained aloof from the simple folk, but after he heard this teaching, he was *mekarev* them.

15. The Rebbe in *Sefer HaSichos 5751*, Vol. 1, p. 266, points out that chapter 32 was missing in the first edition of *Tanya*, and the text followed from chs. 31 to 33. It was only in the second and final edition that it was included. From this fact we can conclude that although there may have been a thought not to include ch. 32 (since one does not necessarily have to mention the concept of *abavas Yisrael* in every context) the Alter Rebbe saw in the end that one cannot do without it. In every context, it is therefore necessary to stress the idea of *abavas Yisrael*.

16. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 24, p. 237.

17. The spirit of the Alter Rebbe’s *abavas Yisrael* is obvious when one reads through *Tanya*; see *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, p. 827; *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 2.

In *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 9, p. 156, footnote 23, the Rebbe explains further that since *Tanya* is the “written law” of *Chassidus*, and the chapter dealing with *abavas Yisrael* is ch. 32 (the numerical equivalent of the Hebrew word for “heart,” *lev*, is 32), it follows that *abavas Yisrael* is the heart of *Chassidus*. To explain further: The perfection of each limb of the body is dependent on keeping the *mitzvab* related to that specific limb. (*Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim*, p. 45c). Since *abavas Yisrael* is connected to the heart (i.e., *lev*), it therefore follows that the *mitzvab* corresponding to the heart is *abavas Yisrael*. (Although there are many *mitzvos* connected with the heart, since *abavas Yisrael* is “the entire Torah” [*Shabbos* 31a], which also includes all the *mitzvos* of the obligations of the heart [see *HaYom Yom*, p. 49, that *abavas Yisrael* is greater than *abavas HaShem*] it follows that the whole existence of the heart is connected with *abavas Yisrael*.) Since this is the case with the human heart, it is also the case with the heart of the Torah — since Torah is compared to a person — and is also the heart of the inner dimension of the Torah. [See *Zohar*, Vol. 3, p. 29b and *Sefer HaMaamarim 5701, Masbceini*, ch. 6.] This concept is further illuminated by the statement in *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 31 that when *abavas Yisrael* in the hearts of the Jewish people is as it is prescribed in ch. 32 of *Tanya*, the heart of G-d, the *Shechinah*, is also healthy.

The Rebbe Maharash once said:¹⁸

“Of what use is *Chassidus* and *yiras Shamayim*, fear of Heaven, if the main thing — *abavas Yisrael* — is missing?”

A “chassid” is one who is dedicated to seeking the best for another¹⁹ and who gives up personal benefits for another’s good²⁰ even when personal gain is not assured and the benefit for the other is doubtful.²¹

As an example of the great importance of *abavas Yisrael* to the Chassidic way of life, we are told that in the times of the Alter Rebbe, the love between chassidim was so immense that it was like the love between brothers.²² Others who were not from the Chassidic camp admired the fraternity displayed by the chassidim. Despite that, that Alter Rebbe once commented that

See also *Maamarim 5748*, p. 56, *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. 1, p. 468; *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, p. 770.

18. *HaYom Yom*, p. 77.

19. *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, pp. 32-33. See *HaTamim*, No. 4, p. 45, for some beautiful stories of how great chassidim conducted themselves in this *mitzvab*. From the stories themselves one may learn many *halachas* of love, friendship and peace. Well known is the saying of the Rebbe Rashab (see *Sefer HaSichos 5701*, p. 136) that a chassid is a “lamplighter.” In order to ignite the soul of another (for the soul is compared to a flame — “the lamp of G-d is the soul of man,” *Mishlei 20:27*), a chassid is prepared to overlook personal gain. He will even do this when it is doubtful if he will be successful in his mission, since he is working with a person who ultimately has free choice and who may (G-d forbid) choose not to follow the path of Torah and *mitzvos*. Even so, the chassid will do his utmost to try.

20. *Sichab* of the 12th of Tammuz 5722. In this vein the Alter Rebbe explained the Talmud in *Niddab 17a*, that a chassid burns his pared fingernails, even though burning the nails damages him (in a spiritual sense). See *Tosafos, ibid*.

21. *Ibid*.

22. See *Sefer HaSichos 5705*, p. 39: In a *Simchas Beis Hasbo’eva farbrengen* in the year 5654, the Rebbe Rashab said that *abavas Yisrael* is truly demonstrated by chassidim. At that *farbrengen* were R. Aharon and R. Yekusiel, both *Chassidishe melamdin*. R. Aharon responded to the Rebbe’s words by saying: “Like the love of brothers.” R. Yekusiel responded, “Eh! Like the love of chassidim.” The Rebbe responded, “This is an understanding of a *Chassidishe melamed* — that is the *or chozer* (a reflection of the light) of *komatz aleph ob!* And today why is it [*abavas Yisrael*] missing? Because the ego is a divider.”

See also *Sefer HaMaamarim 5710*, p. 264, that a *Chassidishe* kiss and greeting is full of *abavas Yisrael*.

this fraternity did not reach the level of *abavas Yisrael* demanded by the Baal Shem Tov.²³

Although *abavas Yisrael* exists among all Israel in general and amongst chassidim in particular, it is and must be the specialty of *Chassidei Chabad*²⁴ — Lubavitch.²⁵

23. *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 117. In *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, p. 1028, the Previous Rebbe explains the difference between the revelations of *abavas Yisrael* of the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid and the Alter Rebbe. The Baal Shem was the one who revealed and exposed the idea that *abavas Yisrael*, *abavas HaShem* and *abavas HaTorah* are interconnected and essentially one. The Maggid articulated intellectually the connection between these three loves by way of explaining the three levels of love of *HaShem*: “with all your heart,” “with all your soul,” and “with all your might.” The Alter Rebbe showed the way in which each and every one *can* and *must* reveal these three loves, and pronounced that *abavas Yisrael* is the “gateway” through which one ascends to all levels. See also *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 2, p. 412.

24. And since *Chassidus* is for all Israel, such should also be the conduct of all Israel (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 260). See *sichab* of Purim 5705 printed in *Kovetz Lubavitch*, Vol. 7, p. 22. See also *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 2, p. 119, on the importance of a *farbrengen* in the spirit of *abavas Yisrael*.

See also the letter from the Rebbe (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 21, p. 493), that the education received in Lubavitcher yeshivas is based on the three loves: *abavas HaShem*, *Torah* and *Yisrael*, and that is why one will find past students of the yeshivas in all areas of the world spreading *Yiddishkeit* with great *abavas Yisrael*. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 25, p. 337: a call to the *sbluchim* that the essence of *Chabad* is *abavas Yisrael*.

It is also well known that the Rebbe distributed *Kuntres Heichaltzu* for the purpose of instilling *abavas Yisrael* amongst chassidim, and often encouraged that the *maamar* be studied in public. For example, see *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. 18, p. 221.

See also *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 1, p. 146, where he writes about the necessity of friends and brotherly love. See *ibid.*, p. 198, that chassidim should write to each other and maintain their friendship even from a distance.

See also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 7, p. 187, where the Rebbe writes about unity among *Anash*: “In answer to your letter, it appears that you feel rather forlorn, the main reason being that in your opinion you are not befriended by *Anash*, and they are not doing enough for your wellbeing. I am not now going to dwell on the cause of this matter, however such conduct is the opposite of the desire of the Rebbes of Chabad who sought with great intensity unity among *Anash*, both for those who were born into *Chabad* families (born chassidim) and how much more so for those who became chassidim.”

25. See *Sefer HaZichronos (Memoirs of the Previous Rebbe)*, Vol. 1, p. 2, in which he states that the name of the town Lubavitch was given because the founder of the settlement, a Jew named R. Meir, was filled with *abavas Yisrael* and of love for all creations in general. Thus the town was named “Lyuba,” which means “love” (in Russian) with the suffix “itch” added. The name Lubavitch itself therefore implies love, *abavas Yisrael* and *abavas HaShem*.

The Previous Rebbe related in a talk²⁶ how the Mezritcher Maggid wished to be able to kiss a *Sefer Torah* with the same love that the Baal Shem Tov had for every Jew (see above). The Previous Rebbe then added (also in the name of the Maggid²⁷) that if, while he was still living in this world, the Baal Shem Tov would have known that which he knows now (i.e., how much he achieved with his love for all Jews) it would have been totally different!²⁸

The Rebbe Rashab once said: Love is the life-spirit of *Chassidus*. It is the thread that binds chassidim together, and it is the thread that binds the Rebbe with chassidim and the chassidim with the Rebbe. It has no limitations and it transcends all boundaries of time and place.

It is well known that the Rebbes of Chabad set aside time to contemplate deeply each one of their chassidim, reflecting upon their mutual love. Such “*avodah*,” even from a physical distance, had the powerful effect of stimulating and arousing the inner powers of those about whom they were thinking.²⁹

Why the Emphasis on *ahavas Yisrael*?

WHY DOES *CHASSIDUS* PLACE SUCH AN EMPHASIS ON THE *MITZVAH* OF *AHAVAS Yisrael*?

1. Doing a favor for another in the material world exhibits the unity between the physical and the spiritual realms, because the material belongings of another are considered his spiritual concern. This displays true “*achdus HaShem*,” unity of G-d, in that it realizes that both the material and spiritual worlds are all created by One G-d, which is a fundamental teaching of *Chassidus*.³⁰

26. *Sefer HaSichos* 5701, p. 32; 5704, p. 163. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5709, p. 87. *HaYom Yom*, p. 71.

27. See Appendix to *Kesser Shem Tov* 233.

28. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 16, p. 31.

29. *Igras Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 4, p. 429.

30. *Sichab of Shabbos Mevarchim Elul* 5712.

2. As mentioned above, *abavas Yisrael* will bring about the final Redemption. The teachings of *Chassidus* are also a preparation for the coming of *Mashiach*, as we know from the well-known answer of *Mashiach* to the Baal Shem Tov that *Mashiach* will come when the wellsprings of the teachings of *Chassidus* will be spread forth.³¹

The way to unlock the inner dimensions of the soul is through the study of *Chassidus*. And revealing the inner dimension of the soul will reveal the inner dimension of G-d, which is the revelation of *Mashiach*. Since the three loves, *abavas Yisrael*, HaShem, and the Torah are one, it follows that *abavas Yisrael* is central to the Chassidic doctrine which is the revelation of the essence.³²



31. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 609; Vol. 4, pp. 1119, 1235.

32. See *sichah* of *Yud Shevat* 5720, section 3.

Chapter 5

WITHOUT LIMITS

Unlimited *Abavas Yisrael*

ONE'S *AHAVAS YISRAEL* MUST BE UNLIMITED. ONE MUST ALWAYS BE ACTIVELY engaged and search for all means to help another,¹ and this must be approached with a businesslike attitude. Just as a good businessman continually thinks of ways to expand his business and is always searching for new customers, so, too, every Jew must look to expand his “business” of *abavas Yisrael*.²

With regard to the *mitzvah* of *abavas HaShem*, the Torah is not satisfied with the level of “with all your heart” but commands that it be “with all your soul and with all your might.” So too, *abavas Yisrael*, which is a vessel for *abavas HaShem*, must be unlimited.³

One constantly needs to arouse one's *abavas Yisrael*.⁴ This involves a conscious effort with all one's heart and soul to drive the love into one's heart⁵ and to look with a favorable eye⁶ at

1. *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 115; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 260. The Baal Shem Tov explained the *mishnah* (*Pirkei Avos* 2:2): “All Torah study not combined with work will in the end cease and leads to sin,” that the “work” referred to in the *mishnah* refers to the efforts that a person has to make in the area of *abavas Yisrael*, and only through those efforts will the Torah be sustained. It should be noted that this explanation of the Baal Shem Tov had such an effect on Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev that thereafter he devoted his entire life in active pursuit and performance of this *mitzvah*.

See also *Sefer HaSichos 5748*, Vol. I, p. 40, on the necessity to change one's habits and pursue *abavas Yisrael*.

2. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 261. See also *sichah* of the second day Shavuot 5718, section 33.

3. See *Toras Menachem 5711*, Vol. 2, pp. 323-326.

4. *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 1, p. 14.

5. *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 22ff.

6. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 4, p. 1433.

every person no matter what his external qualities or failings. This is the true meaning of the *mitzvah*, “Love your fellow as yourself.”⁷

The Alter Rebbe writes an amazing thing in *Tanya*: If a negative thought about somebody enters one’s mind, it should be treated as an idolatrous thought and immediately removed from the mind.⁸ Furthermore, it could be that a defect that one sees in another may actually stem from that same defect in oneself.⁹ Even if one has actually been wronged, it is correct to learn from Yosef how he repaid evil with kindness.¹⁰

In general, a person should always seek to take every opportunity to explain to one’s own family — such as at the Shabbos and *Yom Tov* table — the importance of *abavas Yisrael*, and in general to widen his circle of friends.¹¹ In addition to the Chassidic explanation of this *mitzvah*, one should also relate stories of *tzaddikim* who excelled in this character trait.¹²

One should always have a welcoming expression on one’s face,¹³ and in discussion one should always speak in a pleasant and peaceful manner; in a way in which one’s *abavas Yisrael* will be felt by the person being spoken to.¹⁴

7. *HaTamim*, Vol. 4, p. 45.

8. This is based on the Talmudic comment (*Erechin* 15b, *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Metzora* 2), “*Lashon hara* (the “evil tongue”) is a terrible sin equivalent to the cardinal sins of idolatry, incest and murder.” If in speech it has such a terrible effect, how much more so in the thought process as is explained at length in *Iggeres HaKodesh* regarding the difference between the effects of thought and speech.

9. See *Likkutei Torah*, *Bebaalos’cha* 33a. *Sichab* of the 13th of Tammuz 5723 (printed in *Or HaChassidus* of R. C. Glitzenstein, p. 213) where the Previous Rebbe gives the explanation of the Baal Shem Tov on the verse in *Yirmeyahu* 2:19, “Your evil shall castigate you,” that the evil one sees in another is in fact one’s own evil. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5710, p. 264.

10. See *Tanya*, ch. 12, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 241.

11. *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 1, p. 14.

12. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711, p. 65. See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. I, p. 77, note 113, that in general when one says words of Torah the words should be filled with a spirit of kindness and *kiruv*.

13. Well known is the saying that a person’s face is a *resbus harabim* — a public domain. No matter what mood a person is in regarding his personal matters, he should still try to show a welcoming and smiling face to others.

14. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 248.

Doing a Favor

THE ALTER REBBE RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING TEACHING FROM THE TZADDIK

Reb Mordechai, who had heard it from the Baal Shem Tov: A soul may descend to this world and live seventy or eighty years, just to do a Jew a material favor, and certainly a spiritual one.¹⁵

This is truly a remarkable statement, for it suggests that although for seventy or eighty years a Jew may have learned much Torah and performed many *mitzvos* — all of which cause great delight to G-d — it could be that that is not the ultimate purpose of his soul's descent. Moreover, the Baal Shem Tov delivered this teaching to one of his greatest students, Reb Mordechai, whose learning and performance of *mitzvos* was exemplary. Only through doing another Jew a favor, the Baal Shem Tov told Reb Mordechai, would the purpose of the soul's descent be achieved.¹⁶ If these words were spoken to such a person as Reb Mordechai, then they certainly apply to us.

Since we cannot know which favor is the purpose of our soul's descent,¹⁷ it follows that we must make the greatest effort to do another favor and yet another favor in the physical and particularly in the spiritual realms for another Jew.¹⁸

15. *HaYom Yom*, p. 51; *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, p. 1126. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 4, p. 1255.

16. And the soul would reach heights through doing the favor that could not be achieved prior to the descent.

17. The favor is therefore a question of *pikuach nefesh*, not only for the life of the one for whom one is performing the favor, but for the person doing the favor, as it could be that the entire descent of his soul is for that reason.

18. *Sichab of Shabbos Parshas Ki Sissa* 5745, section 10. In that *sichab* the Rebbe also quotes the story (printed in full in *Pokei'ach Ivrim*, p. 18) of the great chassid of the Alter Rebbe, R. Yosef Beshenkovitch to whom the Alter Rebbe once told in *yechidus* that for the good of his *nesbamab*, it would be better for him to be a wagon driver than to be a *Rav*. The story continues that although he had spent the last fifty years learning, Reb Yosef followed the Alter Rebbe's instruction and became a wagon driver. After ten years had elapsed at this trade, he met an estranged Jew and he made him a *baal teshuvah*. Afterwards, the Mitteler Rebbe told Reb Yosef that he had fulfilled the purpose of being a wagon driver and he was now to return to being a teacher of *Chassidus*. The Rebbe points out: Why was it necessary that Reb Yosef had to be a wagon driver for more than ten years before he met the Jew? In order to make the *baal teshuvah*, surely it would have

Furthermore, one should regard each favor as the purpose for which one's soul came down to this world.

The efforts to do a favor for another should be undertaken in the manner similar to that of a slave.¹⁹ If one were to hear some bad news about another, whether of a material problem and how much more so a spiritual one, he shouldn't make all kinds of calculations, but should make all efforts to help, regardless of whether or not he is actually obligated.²⁰ Even if the efforts may not be successful, one should still try,²¹ because the pain one feels²² for another should touch one deeply and

been enough just to leave the learning for a while — but why for so long? Imagine the inner pain that Reb Yosef felt when he had to leave his beloved learning behind and do the mundane things that a wagon driver has to do! And the biggest question was that in *yechidus* the Alter Rebbe did not even hint as to the purpose for which he was to become a wagon driver except that it was for the good of his soul! The Rebbe therefore says that it could be that the whole purpose of the ten years was to bring Reb Yosef to the state of “a broken heart” (and there is nothing as complete as a broken heart). Whatever the explanation may be, we see from this story the importance of doing a favor for a single Jew.

See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. I, p. 34.

19. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5691, ch. 6.

20. Even if there may be a ruling according to the *Shulchan Aruch* that one does not have to make such efforts for such a person, and if one were to come and ask a question of a Rav, the Rav would rule in the negative, even so, one should have *mesirus nefesh* to help out. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5701, p. 163; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 6, p. 288.

21. As in the story that the Alter Rebbe tells about the prince who became ill and the doctors suggested that if the jewel in the king's crown were to be crushed and mixed with water, this might save the prince's life. So, too, in our generation, the King's crown, i.e., the inner dimension of the Torah, has been given to us. *Likkutei Sichos, ibid.*

22. In the *sichab* of Purim 5720, section 5, the Rebbe related a story from the Rebbe Rashab that illustrates this point:

The story took place while the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek was still living and the Rebbe Rashab was no more than five or five and a half, because the Rebbe Rashab was five and a half when the Tzemach Tzedek passed away. Being a child, the Rebbe Rashab was then playing with his older brother, Reb Zalman Aharon. Since they both grew up in a house where the talk was constantly about a Rebbe and a chassid, they decided to play Rebbe and chassid. Since Reb Zalman Aharon was one and a half years older than the Rebbe Rashab, it was decided that Reb Zalman Aharon would play Rebbe and the Rebbe Rashab would be the chassid.

When the Previous Rebbe related this story, he described how Reb Zalman Aharon then sat down on a chair and adjusted his hat to look like the hat of a rebbe, after which the Rebbe Rashab approached him and asked for a *tikkun* (advice on how to rectify a sin). Reb Zalman Aharon asked the Rebbe Rashab, “What do you need a *tikkun* for?” The Rebbe Rashab replied, “Last Shabbos, I ate nuts, and only later I found out that the

essentially,²³ and on this level there is no room for calculations.²⁴ One should also avoid making a calculation as to whether the other person actually needs what he has requested — whether it is essential or non-essential.²⁵ If it has been requested, one should fulfill the request without making calculations.²⁶ Neither should one calculate what one will receive for doing the favor — not even the spiritual rewards.²⁷ Even if one has an object which is difficult to find elsewhere, one should be prepared to give it away joyfully to another.²⁸

Alter Rebbe writes in his *Siddur* that one should not eat nuts on Shabbos.” Reb Zalman Aharon answered him, “[Your *tikkun* is that] You should always pray while looking inside a *siddur* — not by heart.” The Rebbe Rashab then replied, “This [the advice you gave me] won’t help because [I see] you are not a Rebbe! And how do I know? Because when a Rebbe answers, he must give a sigh. The advice you gave me may be good advice, but it was said without a sigh! If you didn’t sigh then you are not a Rebbe, and if you are not a Rebbe then your advice is not advice!”

From this we learn, concluded the Rebbe, that when one Jew helps another, it is not enough just to do the action, but the action must be accompanied with a sigh.

23. The Baal Shem Tov related the following story: Heaven and earth shall be my witness that there was once a simple Jew who knew only how to pray and recite Psalms, who, upon presenting himself after he departed from this world before the Heavenly Court, was faced with serious judgment. It was only on account of the fact that he excelled in *abavas Yisrael*: in thought — always thinking about *abavas Yisrael*; in speech — always speaking about *abavas Yisrael*; and in action — always helping another to the best of his ability, feeling and sensitivity to the pain of another man or woman, and conversely rejoicing in their *simchabs*, it was only because of this attribute that he was awarded a place in the Garden of Eden between the *tzaddikim* and the *gaonim*, as the rabbis have said, they are true lovers of Israel. The sigh that is made when one hears of another’s misfortune can break through the iron curtains of the *mekatregim* (accusing angels), and the *simchab* and the blessing that one Jew gives another when he rejoices in his *simchab* and blesses him is accepted by *HaShem* like the prayer uttered by R. Yishmael the High Priest in the Holy of Holies (*Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 164).

24. *Sichab* of the 10th of Shevat printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5701, p. 163, and in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 6, pp. 283-289. In the *sichab* the Rebbe related a story from the Previous Rebbe which illustrates this point. See ch. 11 of this book.

25. See *Kesubos* 67b and *Rashi*, *Devorim* 15:8 — even a horse to ride on and a servant to run before him. See *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh De’ab* 250:1.

26. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 56.

27. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 1058-9. Even if by doing the favor one will become “defiled” (as in the case of the *koben* who offered the Red Heifer), one should make no calculations, as calculations are all in *sefer habishtalsbelus* (the chain order of creation). Going above all calculations reaches the Essence.

28. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 4, p. 1107 — even by giving to somebody who may have succumbed to sin, and even if the favor will not be attributed in one’s name.

The accepted rule²⁹ that the “brain rules the heart” should not apply when deciding how to help another.³⁰ It is absolutely necessary to train children in such a spirit — to raise a generation that is prepared to give away what they have for the good of another, and to do it joyfully.³¹

Human activity can be divided into two categories: matters of the body and matters of the soul. *Abavas Yisrael* extends equally to both these areas. In matters of the body, we learn from the *Tanya*: “His body should be despised,” i.e., material possessions should not be of great importance, and therefore one should not feel that a person will encroach on his borders.

In matters of the spirit, one should never think that because of one’s own distinction and loftiness of soul, one should not associate with another who is not on the same level. The reasons for this are that 1) “As for the soul and spirit, who knows their greatness and level in their root and source in the living G-d?”³² (It may be in fact that in his source, his friend is in fact greater than he) and 2) “Since they are all equal and they have one father,” they are, in fact, one.³³

It therefore follows that one should also be willing to do a favor for a child — whether a child in age or in education. We learn this from the fact that G-d removed the taste from certain foods in the wilderness so that it should not affect even the infants who were nursing. We can also learn from this how important it is to have *mesirus nefesh*, self-sacrifice, for the *chinuch* of even small children.³⁴

Doing a favor for another, in addition to fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael*, also helps to draw the person closer to

See also the *sichab* of the 12th of Tammuz 5719 to learn from the *abavas Yisrael* of Yosef *hatzaddik*.

29. *Tanya*, ch. 12.

30. *Sichab* of Purim 5704, printed in *Kovetz Lubavitch*, Vol. 2, p. 19.

31. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 4, p. 1107.

32. *Tanya*, ch. 32, quoted above.

33. *Sichab* of *Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel Pekudei* 5724, section 3.

34. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 33, p. 76.

HaShem spiritually.³⁵ One of the ways to be successful in outreach is to do a favor for another even if it may be only in material matters.³⁶ One should not make this favor dependent on spiritual advancement or conditional on *mitzvah* observance; rather, one should display true *abavas Yisrael* and do another a favor simply because he is a fellow Jew.³⁷ Once a person has seen that somebody has done him a favor out of true *abavas Yisrael*, then when the person who received the favor is asked to do a *mitzvah*, in the words of the Sages,³⁸ “A man will not display *chutzpah* before his debtor.”

One must not hesitate to do a favor just for an individual — be it either material or spiritual. Every Jew is “a whole world” and should be viewed as such. It is a well-known saying of the Previous Rebbe that every Jew is considered like a community, because he has the power to make a community and to give life to a community.³⁹

Conversely, if one is the recipient of a favor, one should never think that the person doing the favor has ulterior motives, or perhaps he is doing the favor because he is naturally disposed to helping others, rather one should view the favor as a true act of *abavas Yisrael*.⁴⁰

35. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, pp. 133, 261. See *sichab* of the second day Shavuos 5718, section 33.

36. This in fact was the way of the Baal Shem Tov, first to help another Jew materially (e.g., in his livelihood), and then to arouse him as regards *mitzvah* performance. In truth, this is not novel, for this was also the approach taken by our patriarch Avraham. Even when Arabs arrived with dust on their feet (to which they had bowed in an idolatrous fashion), Avraham ran and served them all their hearts’ desire: Sarah made them cakes, etc., Avraham himself prepared the meat: three tongues and mustard! If that is how Avraham treated the Arab visitors, how much more so should we treat a fellow Jew! (*Hisvaadiyus 5745*, Vol. 2, p. 739.)

37. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, p. 90, that true love of the essence transcends all calculations, even that of “perhaps he may draw him near to Torah and *mitzvos*.”

38. *Bava Metzia* 3a.

39. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 502. And even a person who naturally is private and reserved is only so naturally. However, after “*avodah*,” who knows what he can achieve, as is well known the ruling (*Talmud Yerushalmi, Kesubos 5:2*) that a ruling of Torah can change nature.

40. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 21, p. 50.

Self Sacrifice for *Abavas Yisrael*

NOT ONLY IS ONE OBLIGATED TO TRY TO HELP ANOTHER, ONE MUST HAVE *mesirus nefesh* to help another,⁴¹ even for a Jew whom one has never met.⁴² In this respect, *abavas Yisrael* is compared to *abavas HaShem*⁴³ in that not only must it be “with all your heart and with all your soul,” but it must also be “with all your might,” i.e., with *mesirus nefesh*.

An example of having *mesirus nefesh* for *abavas Yisrael* may be taken from Moshe Rabbeinu. The *parshah* of *Tetzaveh* is the only *parshah* in the Torah after Moshe’s birth that does not contain his name. The *Baal HaTurim* gives the explanation that when Moshe was defending the Jews after the sin of the Golden Calf, he told G-d that if He does not forgive them then, “erase my name from the book that You have written.”⁴⁴ We are told that the curse of a sage is fulfilled even if it is conditional,⁴⁵ and therefore the name of Moshe does not appear in the *parshah* of *Tetzaveh*. We see from this how Moshe was willing to give up his connection with Torah — which was his whole existence — for the sake of his people, people who in fact had sinned by worshipping the Golden Calf. Through his *mesirus nefesh* for *abavas Yisrael*, Moshe opened the channels for Jews to conduct themselves likewise in all times and places.⁴⁶

A further example of Moshe Rabbeinu’s unlimited *abavas Yisrael* is witnessed in the episode of the breaking of the Tablets.⁴⁷ The Tablets of stone were the “work of G-d and the writing of G-d,”⁴⁸ which Moshe merited to receive directly from Him. The Tablets were incredibly precious to Moshe, as was

41. *HaTamim*, No. 8, p. 50, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov.

42. *HaYom Yom*, p. 113, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov.

43. *Sichab* of the Seventh Day of Pesach 5705, printed in *Kovetz Lubavitch*, No. 7, p. 24.

44. *Shemos* 32:32.

45. *Makkos* 11a.

46. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 21, p. 179.

47. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, pp. 278-9, how *abavas Yisrael* corrects the breaking of the Tablets.

48. *Shemos* 32:16.

his great love for Torah in general.⁴⁹ However, when Moshe, the true lover and shepherd of Israel, saw that the Tablets could cause damage to *klal Yisrael* (their being the *kesubah*, marriage contract, between G-d and His people) then without hesitation he smashed them.

For this great act of love for the Jewish people, G-d praised Moshe for his decision to break the Tablets. The fundamental importance of this teaching is indicated by the fact that it is the content of the last verse of the Torah which states: “before the eyes of Israel.” Rashi comments that this refers to the breaking of the Tablets and G-d’s gratitude to Moshe. A true Jewish leader will stop at nothing to defend his people.⁵⁰

Rabbi Akiva and the Rashbi

ALTHOUGH RABBI AKIVA TAUGHT THAT THE *MITZVAH* TO “LOVE YOUR fellow as yourself” is a great principle of the Torah, it is well known that 24,000 of his students died because they did not honor each other. The Rebbe explains that being true students of Rabbi Akiva, each one of them understood his mentor’s teachings slightly differently and each could not accept the others’ interpretation. It was this inability to accept the others’ opinions that led to a lack of honor. Because Rabbi Akiva’s students should certainly have demonstrated *ahavas Yisrael*, it was they who were punished so severely for their lack of it.

49. So much so that the Torah is called “Moshe’s Torah” — see *Malachi* 3:22 and *Shemos Rabbah* 30:4.

50. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 34, pp. 220-1. See also Vol. 24, p. 258, where the Rebbe explains how before the passing of Moshe *Rabbeinu*, he mentions Aharon, to indicate the greatness of Aharon’s *avodah* of loving the creations and drawing them near to Torah. Even in death, Moshe *Rabbeinu* was destined to be with his people, as he was buried in the Transjordan so that upon Resurrection he will lead them into the land. See *Midrash Rabbah*, *Bamidbar* 19:13. In *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 323, the Rebbe points out that Rabbi Akiva, the one who said that *ahavas Yisrael* is a great principle of the Torah, also ruled that the generation of the wilderness would have no place in the World to Come (*Sanhedrin* 108a). Even so, Moshe is the faithful shepherd and stays with them.

From this story one learns how important it is to maintain *abavas Yisrael* even when a situation arises in which one may feel that it is not necessary to show another respect.

The fact that Rabbi Akiva's students stopped dying on Lag BaOmer has a connection with Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai (the Rashbi) who passed away years later on Lag BaOmer. A later student of Rabbi Akiva, the Rashbi was ordained by Rabbi Akiva after the passing of the 24,000 students.

We find that the first thing the Rashbi did upon leaving the cave in which he found refuge from the Roman authorities was to search for something he could do to benefit another. Rather than immediately gathering students and teaching them Torah, his first act was one of *abavas Yisrael*. His great *mesirus nefesh* for *abavas Yisrael* rectified the dishonor exhibited by Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 students, and as a result, the Rashbi blazed the path for every Jew to follow.⁵¹



51. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 32, p. 152.

Chapter 6

TO ALL ISRAEL

To All Jews

THE MITZVAH OF *AHAVAS YISRAEL* EXTENDS TO ALL CATEGORIES OF JEWS:

1. To a Jew who is distant geographically — even if he is on the other side of the world,¹ and even if one never saw him before in one's life.²

2. To a Jew who is distant spiritually, even if he is on the other side of the spiritual world and even if one has never experienced a person such as this before.³

1. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 201, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov. In fact this is true *ahavas Yisrael* for it is untainted by any personal preferences or inclinations (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 424).

2. *HaYom Yom*, p. 25, in the name of the Alter Rebbe. In *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 21, p. 51, the Rebbe offers an “intellectual” explanation for this idea, in addition to it being so because all Israel are brothers, as explained in *Tanya*. He postulates that every Jew, in whatever situation he may be, has done many good deeds as the Sages in *Berachos* 57a state: “[A Jew is] Full of *mitzvos* like a pomegranate [is full of seeds].” And since every good deed and even every good thought has an effect on the whole world, as *Rambam* in *Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:4 (based on *Kiddushin* 40b) states: “If he performs one *mitzvah*, he tips his scale and that of the entire world to the side of merit, and brings deliverance and salvation for himself and others.” Therefore the net result is that every Jew receives “salvation” from every other Jew. And even though the person doing the good deed is not thinking about the good that will result for another Jew, particularly another Jew who is at the other end of the world, a Jew he has never seen, even so, since the other has actually benefited from his good deed, this should elicit a reciprocal gratitude, a feeling of *ahavas Yisrael*.

3. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, *ibid.*; See also Vol. 33, p. 147.

3. Not only to simple Jews⁴ but even to the wicked.⁵ In fact, the Maggid of Mezeritch said that one's love for the wicked should be equal to one's love for the righteous.⁶ The reason for this is as stated above: since *abavas Yisrael* is an essential love from the essence of one to the essence of another, then there are no differences between a *tzaddik* (righteous person) and a *rasha* (wicked person).⁷

4. See *HaTamim*, p. 798, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov. In one sense, simple Jews have an advantage over *Bnei Torah* (scholars), as the Baal Shem Tov explained that when one puts on *tefillin*, the *tefillin* of the hand are put on before the *tefillin* of the head. So too it is with the Jews whose attributes are praised in the *tefillin* of the A-Imighty: (*Berachos* 6a) The service of the simple Jews who are masters of good deeds precede the service of those knowledgeable in Torah. See *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 133; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 299.

5. See *Avos D'R. Nosson* 12:3 that Aharon, upon meeting a wicked man, would say *shalom* to him. The next day, when that same man wished to sin, he would say to himself, "Woe to me, how can I show my face to Aharon; I am ashamed since he gave me *shalom*." That man refrained from sinning.

From this *midrash* one can learn much about the approach to the wicked. See *Sichos Kodesh Shabbos Mattos Massei 5735*, Section 6.

Furthermore, one should keep in mind the saying in *Pirkei Avos* 3:14: "Beloved are the people of Israel, for they are called children of G-d." A son remains a son, no matter what situation he may be in, as in the parable given by Rabbi Akiva to the wicked Turnusrufus (*Bava Basra* 10a): There was once a king who was angry with his son and he threw him into prison. The king commanded that nobody should give any food or drink to the prince. One man disobeyed the king's order and fed the prince. When the king heard about it, he sent a present to this man. Why? Because at the end of the day, this was his son. So, too, at the end of the day, every Jew is a child of G-d (See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 17, p. 219).

6. This was said by the Maggid, who heard it in the *Mesivta Dirikia* (the Heavenly Court), to the *tzaddik* Reb Elimelech of Lizensk (*Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 117). See *Tomer Devorah*, ch. 2. This saying of the Maggid was in fact an innovation over the saying of the Baal Shem Tov quoted above. The Baal Shem Tov only spoke about the love for the simple Jew, but the Maggid added that one must also love the wicked (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 299).

7. In this respect, one may learn from the love a person has for himself. King Solomon says in *Mishlei* 10:12: "All iniquity is covered with love." Even when a person delineates aspects in himself which are in the category of "iniquity," the love he has for himself still smothers the iniquity. So too when it comes to loving another, the *abavas Yisrael* should obscure the other's iniquity (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 300). See also *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 29a.

This is also the meaning of what Hillel said to the proselyte (*Shabbos* 31a): "What you do not like done to yourself, do not do to others." Just as one does not like one's own bad points highlighted, so too do not highlight those of another, rather, just like

The Love/Hate Relationship

AS TO WHAT THE SAGES SAID,⁸ THAT “ONE WHO SEES ONE’S FRIEND WHO sins; it is a *mitzvah* to hate him” applies only to one who is Torah observant and one who has already been rebuked and nevertheless has not repented. On the other hand, one who is not Torah observant must be treated with love and kindness, for only with such a loving approach will he be drawn to Torah and *mitzvos*.

In chapter 32 of *Tanya*, the Alter Rebbe writes:

“As for the Talmudic statement that if one sees his friend sinning, he should hate him, and should also relate the fact to his teacher so that he too will hate him, this applies only to one’s companion — one’s equal⁹ — in the study of Torah and the observance of the *mitzvos*.

The sinner in question is a Torah-observant scholar, but has lapsed in this one instance. In this case his sin is much more severe than usual, since it is written that even the inadvertent misdeeds of a scholar are as grave as deliberate sins.¹⁰ But even this general assumption of the gravity

one’s own iniquity is covered by one’s self love, so, too, one’s love of the other should cover his iniquity.

The truth is that on the level of essential love, there is no difference between the *tzaddik* and the *rasha*, and therefore it is an anomaly to say that one should love the *rasha* just like a *tzaddik*. One may suggest that this, in fact, is the innovation in the teaching of the Alter Rebbe over that of the Maggid, that whereas in the Torah of the Maggid there still exists the various levels of *tzaddik* and *rasha*, in the Torah of the Alter Rebbe there exists no difference (*Likkutei Sichos, ibid.*)

8. See *Pesachim* 113b, *Erchin* 16b.

9. The small type indicates the translator’s additions as printed in *Lessons In Tanya*, Kehot, 5753.

10. From a note by the Rebbe, *Lessons In Tanya*, ch. 32. Apparently, the Rebbe is addressing the difficulty inherent in the requirement to hate a pious and scholarly Jew who lapses on occasion, but to love one who is far removed from study and observance of the Torah.

The reason for this differentiation cannot be, says the Rebbe, that one might learn from the lapses of the pious Jew, who is on a level similar to one’s own, but is less likely to learn from the behavior of the non-observant Jew, who in any case lives differently in general.

The Rebbe rejects this on several grounds: 1. If the requirement to hate the sinner were based on the fear that one might come to learn from him, then this hatred should be directed at a sinner who is in contact with oneself at any level, not necessarily one’s peer in Torah observance or scholarship. 2. To avoid imitation of the sinner, it would

of his conduct is not sufficient cause to hate him, as the Alter Rebbe continues. Yet another condition must first be satisfied:

He has also fulfilled with him — with the sinner — the injunction, “You shall repeatedly rebuke your friend.” The word used here for “your friend” also indicates as the Talmud points out — “him who is on a par with you in the Torah and the *mitzvos*,” as it is written in *Sefer Charedim*. But as for one who is not his companion in the Torah and *mitzvos*, so that (as our Sages say concerning the ignorant in general) even his deliberate transgressions are regarded as inadvertent acts, since he is unaware of the gravity of his sin; nor is he on intimate terms with him; — not only is one not enjoined to hate him: on the contrary, he must in fact, strive to become closer to him, as the Alter Rebbe states shortly.

To hate such a sinner is surely unjustifiable, since no sin that he commits is considered deliberate. There is also no reason to keep one’s distance from him out of fear that he will learn from his evil ways (in fulfillment of the exhortation of the *Mishnah*, “Do not fraternize with a wicked man”), since he is not on close personal terms with him in any case.

Therefore, on the contrary: Of this situation Hillel said, “Be one of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving creatures and drawing them near to the Torah.” This means that even those who are far from G-d’s Torah and His service, for which reason they are classified simply as “creatures” — indicating that the fact that they are G-d’s creation is

be enough to keep one’s distance from him; why the need to hate him? 3. The whole concept that someone is to be hated, not because of something hateful about him, but to protect the hater, is most difficult to accept. *Chassidus* requires one to actually suffer harm himself if failure to do so might lead to the remote possibility of his harming his fellow. Such a doctrine would certainly not countenance the suggestion of definitely hurting one’s fellow (by hating him) in order to forestall *possible* harm to oneself; and, at that, to forestall a harm that could befall one only if he failed to resist his own evil inclination!

Clearly, then, the requirement to hate the sinner is not intended to solve one’s own problem of learning from his sinful ways. (This problem is in any event solved by the exhortation of the *Mishnah*, “Do not consort with a *rasha*”; *Pirkei Avos* 1:7.) The Alter Rebbe’s differentiation between one’s peer in Torah and *mitzvos* and others is thus grounded in the reason given in the text.

their sole virtue¹¹ — even those one must attract with strong cords of love.¹²

Perhaps thereby one will be able, after all, to draw them close to the Torah and the service of G-d. And even if one fails, he has not forfeited the merit of the *mitzvah* of neighborly love which he has fulfilled by his efforts in this direction. Furthermore, even those whom one is enjoined to hate — for they are close to him, and he has rebuked them but they have still not repented of their sins — one is obliged to love them too.

But is it possible to love a person and hate him at the same time? The Alter Rebbe explains that since the love and the hatred stem from two different causes, they do not conflict.

And both the love and the hatred are truthful emotions in this case, [since] the hatred is on account of the evil within them, while the love is on account of the good hidden within them, which is the Divine spark within them that animates their Divine soul.

One must also arouse compassion on [the Divine soul of the sinner], for in the case of the wicked, it is in exile within the evil of the *sitra achra*¹³ which dominates it. Compassion banishes hatred and arouses love — as is known from the verse, “Yaakov, who redeemed Avraham.”¹⁴

To summarize:¹⁵

1. Complete *abavas Yisrael* must be shown to those who keep Torah and *mitzvos* properly, and non-observant Jews with whom one has no personal relationship.

11. See *Taanis* 20a, *Sichos Kodesh*, the Last Day of Pesach 5736.

12. And not with strong words. In fact, the use of strong words in this case may be initiated by one's own evil inclination. *Sichos Kodesh* 5743, Vol. 2, p. 787.

13. Lit. the “other side,” a Kabbalistic term for the side of evil.

14. *Yeshayahu* 29:22. Yaakov represents compassion, and Avraham love. When Abraham/love must be redeemed, i.e., brought out of concealment, it is Yaakov/compassion that accomplishes this redemption, since compassion banishes hatred and arouses love.

15. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 27, p. 368.

2. To an observant Jew who has lapsed in his observance and has been rebuked yet still does not change his ways, a love/hate relationship is applicable.

3. Regarding the Jew who is non-observant yet with whom one has a personal relationship, the *Tanya* appears to offer a word of caution. On the one hand, one must show full *ahavas Yisrael*, but on the other hand, one has to be careful that the friendship results in one's friend being drawn to the ways of the Torah and not the reverse, G-d forbid, that one should be drawn to his ways.

The Previous Rebbe brings out this point in *Likkutei Dibburim*:¹⁶

“In whatever direction one can involve a fellow Jew in a positive activity — to reinvigorate his inner essence — that is the direction in which one should exert oneself. This should be done only through *kiruv*, bringing him close to the *mitzvos* in a spirit of friendliness. One must, however, keep in mind that this *kiruv* requires caution: such friendship must be kept within limits. For just as one man exerts an influence on his friend, so in turn does his friend exert an influence on him.

This is a process that passes through various stages. At first one feels compassion for the other. This gives rise to a *limud-zechus*: one seeks ways of justifying the other's conduct. And this is as it should be: one should indeed seek such ways. The person who is the object of this thought, however, must not know of it. The place where this *limud-zechus* belongs is within oneself, when, with tears from the heart, one reads a passage from *Tehillim* for another's sake, and through its words requesting the A-lmighty to have pity on him. This is *ahavas Yisrael*, the love of a fellow Jew, which each Jew should practice toward his good friend — in the meantime being wary of excessive companionship, until, with the A-lmighty's help, the friend is properly set up in an upright manner so that one may and should seek his companionship.”

16. Vol. 1, p. 6.

The obligation to reach out to Jews and draw them near to the ways of Torah and *mitzvos* applies to all types of Jews:

Abavas Yisrael must extend to Jews who can be categorized as a “desolate wilderness”¹⁷: those who are empty of any worthy traits, who possess neither Torah, wisdom, good character traits nor *derech eretz*, and who have even lost their sense of humanity. Their only advantage is that they are a creation of G-d¹⁸ — yet one must reach out even to those Jews, as the *Mishnah* says: “Love the creations and draw them near to the Torah,” i.e., even if they have no other trait except that they are creations of G-d, they must be loved and drawn near to the Torah.¹⁹

Even those who claim to be agnostic or even atheistic must be drawn near to Torah.²⁰ Efforts should be made to be *mekarev* even those who may be categorized as *minim* or *apikorsim* (non-believers and heretics).²¹ There are two reasons for this:

1. Even though King David said²² about the *apikorsim*, “I hate them completely,”²³ and the Sages rule that they have no portion in the World to Come,²⁴ the verse²⁵

17. In *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 8, p. 238, the Rebbe points out that if one meets a Jew who is in the category of a “desolate wilderness” one may think, “What connection do I have with such a person?” The answer: The very fact that the Torah was given in a desert is itself proof that a “desert” can receive the Torah. Since the A-lmighty guides the steps of man, it is Divine Providence that brought about the meeting and a clear instruction that there is an obligation and merit to influence the “desert” to receive the Torah. True *abavas Yisrael* is to give the recipient the same Torah that you have received. As a reward, G-d will also perform the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* and give the “giver” all he desires in Torah.

18. See *Taanis* 20b: “Go and tell the Craftsman who made me.”

19. *Tanya*, ch. 32. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, pp. 100, 225; Vol. 2, p. 315. *Sichah* of the 13th of Tammuz 5723. See also letter in *Sefer HaSichos* 5751, p. 890.

20. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 680. See also *Rambam*, *Hilchos Gerushin*, ch. 2:20, “He is forced until he says I want to” — this indicates that the inner will of every Jew is in fact to do the Will of G-d.

21. See *Igras Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. 2, p. 164, a lengthy letter that deals with the Alter Rebbe’s reference in *Tanya*, ch. 32, to *minim* and *apikorsim*. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 27, p. 368, as to the definition of *minim* and *apikorsim* in the contemporary situation. See also *Chassidic Dimensions* (Schochet, Kehot), Vol. 3, p. 45.

22. *Tebillim* 139:22.

23. See *Shabbos* 116a.

24. See, however, *To Live and Live Again* (Sichos In English), ch. 5.

25. *Tebillim* 104:35; See *Berachos* 10a.

nevertheless says, “Let sin be destroyed from the world”, ‘sin’ and not the ‘sinners.’²⁶ Their sins should be hated²⁷ and despised; however efforts must be made to cause them to do *teshuvah*.²⁸

2. In today’s generation, disbelief is largely due to ignorance.²⁹ In addition, no man can know what lies deep in another man’s heart,³⁰ and therefore, even if the person verbally denies belief in G-d,³¹ it is possible that deep down he does believe³² and he should be judged favorably.³³

26. See *Maamar Havayah Li BeOzrai*, Defiance and Devotion, p. 57ff.

27. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 25 p. 337; a *sichab* in which the Rebbe strongly encouraged all the students of *Tomchei Temimim*, (the Lubavitcher Yeshivas), to go on *shlichus* and conquer the world with *Yiddishkeit*. He then added: It is not necessary to bring a proof that the way of *Chabad* and the *shluchim* of *Chabad* is with *abavas Yisrael* and with pleasant ways and ways of peace, for that is the essence of *Chabad* and *Lubavitch*, *abavas Yisrael*, and *achdus Yisrael*. And even when it comes to a Jew who does not conduct himself properly, the verse says, “Let the sins be destroyed” and not the sinners. *Chabad* fights a war with sins but not with sinners; on the contrary, one must cause the sinners to do *teshuvah*. One must definitely not give a *hechsber* (stamp of approval) to the ways of the sinners, and one should make sure nobody walks in their path. Nevertheless, it is a war with sins but not with sinners.

28. *Sichab* of the 12th of Tammuz 5717, section 3.

29. *Sefer HaMaamarim 5711*, p. 242.

30. *Pesachim* 54b.

31. To the extent that an earthly court would be able to punish him for his actions, however, “It is not as man sees — man sees what his eyes behold, but G-d sees into the heart.” *I Shmuel* 16:2.

32. In this respect he could be compared to the “gatherer of sticks” in the wilderness who was punished for his crime of desecrating the Shabbos, even though he had pure intentions (see *Tosafos, Bava Basra* 119b), for the earthly court cannot entertain matters of the heart, they only have what their eyes see (*Chiddushei Agados, Maharscha, Bava Basra* 119a).

33. *Pirkei Avos* 1:6. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 27, p. 90, where the Rebbe explains why it was necessary for a *Kohen* to pronounce the uncleanness of a leper. Since a *Kohen* is a kind person and blesses the people with love (see text of the Priestly Blessing), it is only he who can pronounce uncleanness, for before he does so he will always try to find ways in which to make the verdict positive. So, too, if one finds a Jew whom one wants to pronounce “unclean,” such a pronouncement has to be preceded with *abavas Yisrael*.

It was for these reasons that the Rebbes of Chabad sought to be *mekarev* (bring close) every Jew.³⁴

34. Once the Previous Rebbe was asked how he could be *mekarev* even those who were in the category of “*moridin v’lo maalin*,” i.e., if they were in danger of life, nothing should be done to save their life, as ruled in the *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat*. The Rebbe replied that there are four sections to the *Shulchan Aruch*. The last of the four sections is *Choshen Mishpat* which contains over 420 chapters (see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 620). The laws of “*moridin*” are in the last chapters. Only when one has learned and kept all the laws from the beginning of the *Shulchan Aruch* until these final laws is one qualified to rule in these laws (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 134).

What the Rebbe meant was the following: When one wishes to do something negative to another Jew, and one claims that such conduct is sanctioned by the Torah, in addition to the fact that he may have made a mistake in the *halachah*, it could be that there is a selfish motivation, or that naturally he is a wicked person and he is hiding behind reasons of *yiras Shamayim* to justify his intentions (See *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 89b, *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5706, *Maamar Ata Hivdalta*, section 3.) However, when one does another Jew a favor or a good deed, there is no doubt that he is doing a *mitzvah* (*Likkutei Sichos, ibid.*).

See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 33, p. 148.

WE HAVE A TRADITION FROM THE BAAL SHEM TOV: WHEN ONE HEARS SOMETHING DEROGATORY ABOUT ANOTHER JEW, EVEN A STRANGER, ONE SHOULD BE SORELY DISTRESSED, SINCE SOMEBODY MUST BE GRIEVOUSLY WRONG — IF THE DEROGATORY TALE IS TRUE, THEN THE SUBJECT IS WRONG; IF THE TALE IS A FALSEHOOD THEN THE TALEBEARER IS IN AN UNENVIABLE SITUATION.

(*HaYom Yom*, p. 112)

A TRADITION FROM THE BAAL SHEM TOV: WHOEVER JUDGES ANOTHER, FAVORABLY OR CRITICALLY, IS ACTUALLY SITTING IN JUDGMENT OF HIMSELF. WHOEVER SHARES THE OTHER'S ANGUISH AND PRAYS FOR HIM WILL BE REWARDED.

(*HaTamim* p. 740)

THE ALTER REBBE QUOTING THE MAGGID IN THE NAME OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV: "LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF" IS AN INTERPRETATION AND EXPOSITION OF "LOVE THE L-RD YOUR G-D." HE WHO LOVES A FELLOW JEW LOVES G-D, FOR HE CONTAINS WITHIN HIMSELF A PART OF G-D ABOVE. LOVE FOR HIM, FOR HIS INWARD SELF, IS LOVE OF G-D.

(*HaYom Yom*, p. 78)

THE SIGH OF A JEW OVER THE SUFFERING OF ANOTHER JEW BREAKS ALL THE BARRIERS OF THE ACCUSERS, AND THE JOY AND BLESSINGS WITH WHICH ONE REJOICES IN ANOTHER'S HAPPINESS AND BLESSES HIM IS AS ACCEPTABLE BY G-D AS THE PRAYER OF RABBI YISHMAEL, THE HIGH PRIEST IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES. (*Sefer HaSichos 5703*, p. 161)

LOVE OF G-D AND LOVE OF ISRAEL ARE EQUALLY ENGRAVED ON THE *NESHAMAH*, *RUACH* AND *NEFESH* OF EVERY JEW. IT IS AN EXPLICIT PASSAGE IN THE TORAH: "I LOVE YOU, SAYS THE L-RD." (*MALACHI 1:2*) LOVE OF ISRAEL IS SO GREAT, FOR HE LOVES WHOM THE BELOVED LOVES.

(*HaTamim*, p. 375)

"LOVE THE L-RD YOUR G-D." *AHAVAS YISRAEL* IS AN INSTRUMENT FOR LOVE OF G-D. THE MITTELER REBBE COMMENTING ON THIS TEACHING OF HIS FATHER: *AHAVAS YISRAEL* WAS IMPLANTED WITHIN HIS DISCIPLES EVEN UNTO THEIR SMALLEST FINGERNAIL.

(*Sefer HaSichos 5702*, p. 15)

THERE IS LOVE OF G-D, LOVE OF TORAH, AND LOVE OF ISRAEL. IN EACH OF THESE THREE TYPES OF LOVE THERE ARE THREE STAGES: WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL THAT YOU POSSESS. LOVE OF ISRAEL TRANSCENDS THEM ALL, FOR IT INCLUDES THEM ALL WITHIN ITSELF. WHOEVER HAS *AHAVAS YISRAEL* INEVITABLY HAS LOVE OF TORAH AND LOVE OF G-D TOO. BUT IF ONE HAS LOVE OF G-D, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT HE MAY LACK LOVE OF TORAH, AND IF HE HAS LOVE OF TORAH HE MIGHT WELL LACK LOVE OF ISRAEL.

(*Sefer HaSichos 5705*, p. 120)

Chapter 7

HILLEL AND RABBI AKIVA

(Adapted from *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 17, pp. 215-224)

The Torah on One Foot

THE TALMUD IN *TRACTATE SHABBOS* 31A RELATES THE FOLLOWING WELL-KNOWN story of Hillel:

“On another occasion it happened that a certain heathen came before Shammai and said to him, “Make me a proselyte, on the condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot.”¹ Thereupon he chased him away with the builder’s cubit that was in his hand.² When he came before Hillel, (he also asked Hillel to teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot) Hillel replied, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah while the rest is commentary; go and learn it.”³

While it is clearly suggested in the *Talmud* that *abavas Yisrael* is the entire Torah and the rest is commentary, this statement of Hillel requires clarification.

It is well known that the 613 Commandments may broadly be divided into two categories: between man and G-d, and between man and man. The *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* is

1. See *Kli Yakor* on the verse “Love your fellow as yourself” for an explanation as to why the *ger* wished to hear the Torah standing on one foot.

2. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 321, for an explanation of Shammai’s conduct.

3. See *Hisvaadiyus* 5744, Vol. 3, p. 1971, that “go and learn it” is a directive to go and learn how every part of the Torah is an explanation of the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael*. See also *Hisvaadiyus* 5743, p. 50, that “go and learn” is the imperative to see continually how the individual is one part of a large body. See also *Hisvaadiyus* 5745, Vol. 2, p. 1193, for an alternative explanation: “Go and learn” is a promise, i.e., if one fulfills the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* properly, one will merit to learn the entire Torah which is an explanation of the *mitzvah*.

obviously fundamental in the realm of *mitzvos* between man and man; however, how can it be suggested that it is the *entire* Torah — that it also applies to *mitzvos* between man and G-d?

The Great Principle

ON THE VERSE, “LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF,” THE CLASSIC commentator *Rashi* quotes from *Toras Kobanim*, an early Midrashic text regarding the famous dictum of Rabbi Akiva: “Love your fellow as yourself — Rabbi Akiva says this is a great principle of the Torah.”⁴

It is well known that Rabbi Akiva lived many years after Hillel. One may therefore ask: If Hillel has already stated that *ahavas Yisrael* is the *entire* Torah and the rest of the Torah is just commentary, what has Rabbi Akiva added in his statement by saying that *ahavas Yisrael* is a “great principle” of the Torah? Surely this idea is already included in the words of Hillel.⁵

Bring Them Near to the Torah

WE WILL ANSWER THE ABOVE QUESTIONS BY FIRST INTRODUCING ANOTHER famous saying of Hillel.⁶

4. *Kedoshim* 19:18, *Toras Kobanim*, *ibid*. See also *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Nedarim* 9:4; *Bereishis Rabbah* 24:7.

5. Superficially it would appear that it is for this reason that *Rashi* quotes the dictum of Rabbi Akiva and not the teaching of Hillel, because in the simple meaning of the verse it would suggest that *ahavas Yisrael* is indeed an important principle in the realm of *mitzvos* between man and man, but *not* the entire Torah.

It is interesting to note that *Rashi*, in his commentary on the *Talmud* in *Shabbos* 31a, brings two explanations of Hillel’s words. Firstly, he explains (based on a verse in *Mishlei* 27:10) that just as you do not wish that a friend would disobey your orders, do not disobey the commands of the L-rd. In this, Hillel was drawing a parallel between human and Divine relationships: just as you would like others to listen to your words, so, too, you should listen to the words of G-d. In this light one may easily understand why this is the entire Torah and the rest explanation. *Rashi* then proceeds to bring a second explanation that Hillel actually meant the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael*, but what he meant by the entire Torah was a reference to the majority of *mitzvos* such as robbery, theft, adultery, etc. (See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 17, p. 220, note 48, for further clarification of this *Rashi*.)

6. *Pirkei Avos* 1:12. Note the expression, “Be of the disciples of Aharon...” which implies an imperative and command, not merely pious conduct. The terminology

“Hillel said: Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow creatures, and bringing them near to the Torah.”

One may ask, what is the connection between “loving your fellow creatures” and “bringing them near to the Torah”? The *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael* tells us to show concern for another in all matters both material and spiritual. The Baal Shem Tov taught that one must look to do a favor for another without making it conditional on spiritual achievement or circumstance.⁷ Why then does the *mishnah* make this connection?

One way of explaining it is to say that the *mishnah* is giving a directive as to the boundaries of *ahavas Yisrael*: fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael* should never be an excuse to “dilute” the words or ways of the Torah to the ways of the people, rather the opposite: one must draw the people nearer to the ways of the Torah.⁸

According to this explanation, however, the words “and bring them near to the Torah” are peripheral to the concept of *ahavas Yisrael*, explaining only the parameters of *ahavas Yisrael*. The plain meaning of the *mishnah* instead implies that “bringing them near to the Torah” is not merely tangential but rather a direct consequence of “loving your fellow creatures,” i.e., *ahavas Yisrael* reflects itself and is demonstrated in “bringing them near to the Torah.”⁹

suggests that every person is empowered and has the potential to be of the students of Aharon.

The plural, “of the students...,” also suggests that one should not be the sole student of Aharon, rather one should be of the *students* of Aharon, amongst many students who try to emulate Aharon’s ways, in such a manner that invites “the jealousy of *sofrim* that increases knowledge” (*Bava Basra* 21a), i.e., that the jealousy brings him to increase in *ahavas Yisrael* over and above the other students. (See *Sefer HaSichos* 5751, Vol. II, p. 717.)

7. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 261.

8. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 316; Vol. 15, p. 198.

9. This is also evident from *Tanya*, ch. 32, where the Alter Rebbe quotes the teaching of Hillel and explains: “That is to say, that even those who are distant from the Torah ... one is required to draw them with strong ropes of love, so that perhaps one may be able to draw them near to Torah and the service of G-d.” What is clear is that the purpose of “drawing them with ropes of love” is to draw them nearer to the Torah.

The question is made even stronger with the explanation in chapter 32 of *Tanya* which states that *ahavas Yisrael* must be in a way of realizing that the other Jew possesses a soul which, in its source, is one with all other souls, which explains why *ahavas Yisrael* has no limits and applies to the great as well as the small — and as the Mezritcher Maggid says¹⁰ — one must love the perfectly wicked just as the perfectly righteous. If *ahavas Yisrael* must be independent of the Jew's standing in his G-dly service, why then does the *mishnah* state that *ahavas Yisrael* must manifest itself in “bringing them near to the Torah”?

First in Thought

THE EXPLANATION:

There is a well-known saying of the Sages:¹¹ “The thought of Israel preceded any other.” This means that when G-d created the world, Israel preceded Torah in His thought.

On the other hand, the *Zohar*¹² teaches: “Israel connects with the Torah, and the Torah connects with G-d,” which seems to suggest that Torah precedes Israel.

Chassidic philosophy¹³ explains: In their source, Israel stands higher than the Torah. However, as souls descend below, Torah is higher than Israel, and the connection of a soul to G-d is through Torah.

This explanation elucidates the two opposites in a Jew:

1. Since in his source a Jew stands higher than Torah; therefore, “A Jew even though he has sinned is still

The Alter Rebbe only then points out that even if one was not successful in drawing them nearer to Torah, one still has not lost the *mitzvab* of *ahavas Yisrael*. (Note the expression “not lost” rather than the positive “has still gained,” for the true aim of *ahavas Yisrael* is to draw them nearer to the Torah, and one may think that if one is not successful in drawing them nearer to the Torah, one has lost the *mitzvab*. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 17, p. 221, note 53.)

10. Quoted in *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 117.

11. *Bereishis Rabbah* 1:4.

12. See *Likkutei Torah*, *Nitzavim*, *Ki Karov*; *Rosh Hasbanab*, p. 59a; *Sbir HaShirim*, 16d. See also *Zohar*, Vol. 3, p. 73a.

13. *Likkutei Torah*, *ibid*. *Sefer HaMaamarim 5672*, Vol. 1, section 76., Vol. 3, p. 1403. *Sefer HaMaamarim 5700*, *Oz Yoshir*, ch. 3.

called a Jew.”¹⁴ No number of sins can rid the Jew of the title “Jew,” because the connection of the Jew’s essence with G-d is not dependent upon his observance of Torah and *mitzvos*.¹⁵

2. It is this very essential connection that brings every Jew ultimately to do *teshuvah*,¹⁶ and since the connection of a soul with G-d is through the Torah (once the soul descends into a body), eventually the essential connection will bring every Jew to keep the Torah and *mitzvos*.¹⁷

Opposites Reflected

THESE TWO OPPOSITES REFLECT THEMSELVES IN THE *MITZVAH* OF *AHAVAS Yisrael*.

The essence of *ahavas Yisrael* is the love for the soul as it stands in its source united with all other souls, and as it stands above Torah. That essential love therefore transcends Torah observance and extends itself even to those who are distant from the Torah. On this level, there is no differentiation between a *tzaddik* and a *rasha*. Furthermore, the love is not limited to the spirituality of the other Jew but even extends to his material requirements, for even his material requirements are those of a *Jew* (as we view the soul in its essential state.)

However, since the connection of the soul with G-d — as it descends below — is through Torah, therefore *ahavas Yisrael* becomes a *mitzvah* of the Torah, (i.e., we must love a fellow Jew as an imperative of the Torah¹⁸). The *mitzvah* then contains

14. *Sanhedrin* 44a.

15. See at length *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5672, p. 1252.

16. *Tanya*, ch. 39; *Hilchos Talmud Torah* of the Alter Rebbe 4:3.

17. Through that process there is also revealed the essence of the soul as it stands higher than Torah. This is why the *mitzvah* of *teshuvah* — a *mitzvah* that stands higher than Torah for it has a power to compensate anything that was lacking — is also revealed in the Torah. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5666, p. 235; 5672, p. 1408.

18. And there are some Jews whom the Torah says that we must positively hate (See *Tebillim* 139:22; *Shabbos* 116a; *Tanya*, ch. 32). The reason for this is that since below, their souls must connect with G-d through the Torah, and in their present state where

within it all the limitations that the Torah places upon us; for example, the idea mentioned above not to “dilute” the Torah to make it more accessible.

We can now understand the teaching of Hillel: “Love your fellow creatures and bring them near to the Torah.” Although one must have *abavas Yisrael* independent of any standing or levels of observance (because of the essence and source of the soul as explained above); nevertheless, once the soul descends below, its connection to G-d is through the Torah. Therefore, one cannot suffice with *abavas Yisrael* from the sole perspective of the soul’s essence, but should try to bring one’s fellow Jew to a full connection with G-d through the Torah, which recognizes his soul’s connection here below.

A true sense of unity will only be felt if all Jews connect themselves with G-d through the Torah. If a Jew remains “distant from the Torah,” one must still love him because of his essence, his essence being higher than the Torah; however, true *abavas Yisrael* will bring him to a full connection with G-d, and that is accomplished by drawing him near to the Torah. Once a Jew has a connection with G-d through the Torah, his essential bond with G-d can be fully revealed.

The Difference Between Hillel and Rabbi Akiva

WE WILL NOW UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SAYINGS OF Hillel and Rabbi Akiva.

Rabbi Akiva was talking about the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* that must be observed by a Jew *in* a body, i.e., with all the limitations and directions of the Torah. Therefore, he cannot state that *abavas Yisrael* is the *entire* Torah for if so, it could override other rules of the Torah (just as saving a life can

they have cut off all connection with the Torah and have renounced all affiliation to the Torah, it is impossible that there should be a revealed level of *abavas Yisrael* towards them. It should be noted that the reference here is not to those who are distant from the Torah — for they must be drawn with great love — rather this is a reference to the *apikorsim*, and even they must nowadays be considered as “children abducted at an early age,” as explained in an earlier chapter.

override all other rules) and as previously mentioned that is not the case. On the level of Torah, *ahavas Yisrael* is only a “great principle of the Torah” — a principle which must be carried out under the directives of the Torah.

Hillel, however, was talking about the *essential* level of *ahavas Yisrael*, where the Jew stands higher than Torah. On that level, the whole purpose of the Torah is as a means to reveal the essence of the Jew. Since a Jew’s essence is revealed by the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael*, it can therefore be said that it is the entire Torah and the rest is explanation; that is, that the rest of the Torah is the vehicle through which the essence of the Jew is revealed as exemplified in the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael*.

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV: ONE CANNOT ESTIMATE THE AMAZING POWER OF *AHAVAS YISRAEL*. FRIENDS WHO TOGETHER AROUSE HEAVENLY MERCY FOR ANOTHER FRIEND IN DISTRESS HAVE THE POWER TO TEAR UP A 70-YEAR HEAVENLY DECREE. THEY CAN TURN A CURSE INTO A BLESSING AND DEATH INTO LONG LIFE.

(*Sefer HaToldos* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 1, p. 131)

AHAVAS YISRAEL WAS THE PRIMARY “*AVODAH*” OF THE DISCIPLES OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV. EACH OF THE DISCIPLES HAD TO ACQUIRE FOR HIMSELF A GOOD FRIEND. THE BAAL SHEM TOV TRAINED EVEN THE SIMPLE JEWS TO HAVE *AHAVAS YISRAEL* — ALWAYS TO LOOK UPON ANOTHER ONLY WITH A FAVORABLE EYE.

(*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 3, p. 269)

SO, TOO, IN MATTERS AFFECTING A PERSON’S RELATIONS WITH HIS FELLOW, AS SOON AS THERE RISES FROM HIS HEART TO HIS MIND ANY ANIMOSITY OR HATRED, G-D FORBID, OR JEALOUSY, ANGER, OR A GRUDGE AND THE LIKE, HE ALLOWS THEM NO ENTRANCE INTO HIS MIND AND WILL. ON THE CONTRARY, HIS MIND EXERCISES ITS AUTHORITY AND POWER OVER THE FEELINGS IN HIS HEART TO DO THE VERY OPPOSITE, NAMELY, TO CONDUCT HIMSELF TOWARDS HIS FELLOW WITH THE QUALITY OF KINDNESS AND A DISPLAY OF ABUNDANT LOVE TO THE EXTREME LIMITS, WITHOUT BECOMING PROVOKED INTO ANGER, G-D FORBID, OR TO REVENGE IN KIND, G-D FORBID, BUT RATHER TO REPAY THE OFFENDERS WITH FAVORS, AS TAUGHT IN THE *ZOHAR*, THAT ONE SHOULD LEARN FROM THE EXAMPLE OF YOSEF TOWARDS HIS BROTHERS.

(*Tanya*, ch. 12)

THEREFORE, MY BELOVED AND DEAR ONES, I BEG OF YOU TO MAKE AN EFFORT WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL TO DRIVE INTO YOUR HEART THE LOVE FOR ONE'S FELLOW MAN, AS IT IS WRITTEN (*ZECHARIAH* 8:17): "AND NONE OF YOU SHOULD CONSIDER IN YOUR HEARTS THAT WHICH IS EVIL TO HIS FELLOW MAN." SUCH CONSIDERATION SHOULD NEVER RISE IN THE HEART, AND IF IT DOES RISE, ONE IS TO PUSH IT AWAY FROM THE HEART "AS SMOKE IS DRIVEN AWAY" AND TRULY LIKE AN IDOLATROUS THOUGHT, FOR TO SPEAK EVIL IS AS GRAVE AS IDOLATRY, INCEST, AND THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD COMBINED. IF THIS BE TRUE OF SPEECH...; AND THE ADVANTAGE OF THOUGHT OVER SPEECH, WHETHER FOR THE GOOD OR FOR THE BETTER, IS ALREADY KNOWN TO ALL THE WISE OF HEART.

(*Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh, Epistle 23*).

ON THE ABOVE, FROM *IGGERES HAKODESH*, CH. 23, WHERE THE ALTER REBBE WRITES, "THEREFORE, MY BELOVED AND DEAR ONES, I BEG OF YOU TO MAKE AN EFFORT WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL TO DRIVE INTO YOUR HEART THE LOVE FOR ONE'S FELLOW MAN," THE TZEMACH TZEDEK COMMENTS: "ONE WHO DRIVES *AHAVAS YISRAEL* INTO HIS HEART BECOMES A BELOVED FRIEND OF THE ALTER REBBE."

(*Sefer HaSichos 5704, p. 22*)

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK ONCE SAID TO HIS SON THE REBBE MAHARASH: FOR ONE WHO HELPS ANOTHER JEW IN HIS LIVELIHOOD, EVEN IF HE HELPS HIM EARN A MERE 70 *KOPEKS* (A LOW-VALUE RUSSIAN COIN) ON A CALF, ALL THE GATES TO THE HEAVENLY CHAMBERS ARE OPEN FOR HIM. YEARS LATER THE REBBE MAHARASH ADDED: ONE OUGHT TO KNOW THE ROUTE TO THE HEAVENLY CHAMBERS, BUT ACTUALLY, IT IS NOT CRUCIAL. YOU ONLY NEED THE MAIN THING: TO HELP ANOTHER WHOLEHEARTEDLY, WITH SENSITIVITY, AND TO TAKE PLEASURE IN DOING A KINDNESS TO ANOTHER. (*HaYom Yom, p. 66*)

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK ONCE SAID: *ALEPH, BEIS, GIMMEL, DALED. ALEPH* STANDS FOR *AHAVAH/LOVE*. *BEIS* STANDS FOR *BERACHAH/BLESSING*. *GIMMEL* STANDS FOR *GAVAH/ARROGANCE* AND *DALED* STANDS FOR *DALUS/POVERTY*. WHERE THERE IS LOVE THERE IS BLESSING; WHERE THERE IS ARROGANCE THERE IS POVERTY.

(*Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe, Vol. 4, p. 312*)

THE REBBE MAHARASH ONCE SAID: OF WHAT GOOD IS *CHASSIDUS* AND PIETY IF THE MAIN QUALITY, *AHAVAS YISRAEL*, IS LACKING — EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF CAUSING (G-D FORBID) ANGUISH TO ANOTHER?

(*HaYom Yom, p. 77*)

ONCE THE REBBE RASHAB INSTRUCTED HIS SON THE PREVIOUS REBBE TO TRAVEL TO A PARTICULAR PLACE TO HELP A PARTICULAR *CHASSID* AND BUSINESSMAN. WHEN THE PREVIOUS REBBE RETURNED HE TOLD HIS FATHER, "I HAVE DONE EVERYTHING YOU TOLD ME. I DID THE FAVOR IN THE BEST MANNER POSSIBLE." THE REBBE RASHAB REPLIED, "YOU ARE MAKING A MISTAKE. THE FAVOR YOU HAVE DONE IS A FAVOR FOR YOURSELF, NOT FOR THE OTHER. THE *A-LMIGHTY* HAS DONE THE FAVOR FOR THE OTHER; HE ARRANGED EMISSARIES TO FULFILL THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE. THE FAVOR YOU HAVE DONE IS FOR YOURSELF AS IT SAYS IN THE *MIDRASH (VAYIKRA RABBAH 34:10)*, "MORE THAN THE HOUSE OWNER DOES FOR THE POOR MAN, THE POOR MAN DOES FOR THE HOUSE OWNER."

(*Igros Kodesh of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 4, p. 46*)

Chapter 8

OUTREACH

Kiruv

THE FIRST *MITZVAH* IN THE TORAH TELLS US TO “BE FRUITFUL AND multiply,” which in its spiritual meaning is the obligation to “make another Jew” — i.e., to bring another Jew closer to Torah and *mitzvos*.¹

Outreach in its widest possible sense is the greatest demonstration of true *abavas Yisrael*. It is the greatest honor for the Torah when one explains to the largest possible audience — to all Israel — that the Torah is the wisdom and will of G-d, that it is eternal, and that this eternal life has been planted among us with a life lived in accordance to Torah and *mitzvos*.²

The greatest thing that one can give another is life.³ True *abavas Yisrael* is giving another true life — a life of Torah and *mitzvos*. One should make the greatest effort to inject “life”⁴ into one’s friends and students by imbuing them with a “*chayos*” (vivaciousness) and a “*bren*” (passion) for Torah and *mitzvos*. Such feeling should be contagious and should be spread widely.⁵

One can never have a true feeling of *simchab* if a fellow Jew is lacking something, and how much more so in the spiritual realm if he is lacking his “life” — Torah and *mitzvos*. All efforts

1 *Simchab* of the 19th of Kislev 5704. See also *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 4, p. 1491.

2. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 13, p. 292.

3. Not only life in this world but eternal life in the World to Come, which is surely a case of *pikuach nefesh*, a life-saving situation. *Sefer HaSichos 5749*, Vol. I, p. 126.

4. See *Hisvaadiyus 5744*, Vol. 3, p. 1535.

5. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 14, p. 463.

must be exerted in the spirit of *abavas Yisrael* to give him that life.⁶

Even when it may be necessary to rebuke one's fellow, the rebuke should be done privately⁷ and preceded with *kiruv*. Only then will the words of rebuke be heard and accepted. This sequence is reflected in the words of the *mishnah*,⁸ "Love the creations and draw them near to the Torah." First there should be, "Love the creations," which if practiced properly will ultimately lead to "and draw them near to the Torah."⁹

The correct perspective in outreach work is:¹⁰

1. Never to look down at one who is not yet observant (with a "holier than thou" attitude) but always to elevate and bring out the best in a person.

2. To know and to feel that the person can potentially be drawn near.

A Jew should never be completely consumed with self-perfection¹¹ but must also have *abavas Yisrael* and do a favor for another.¹² Since *abavas Yisrael* is "the entire Torah," it therefore

6. See *ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 155.

7. See at length the laws of rebuking, documented in the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 156:7,8. See *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 4, p. 13, where the Previous Rebbe stresses the necessity of rebuking privately and in a way that causes no embarrassment. He also quotes there in the name of his father the Rebbe Rashab that this is the inner meaning of the *mitzvah* of "*kissui badam*," covering the blood.

8. *Pirkei Avos* 1:12.

9. *Sichab* of the 13th of Tammuz 5723. Furthermore, if one's first approach is with *abavas Yisrael*, there is little room for error, whereas if a critical approach is taken, one must be a thousand percent sure that the motivation is out of pure *abavas Yisrael*. One must always therefore err on the side of *abavas Yisrael* and follow our Patriarch Avraham's example in this matter. (See *sichab* of the 10th of Shevat 5719).

10. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, p. 90. See also *Hisvaadiyus 5744*, Vol. 3, p. 1725.

11. See *Sefer HaSichos 5701*, p. 33, which states that one should view every Jew as a partner. One cannot claim, "I am learned, I put on three pairs of *tefillin*, what do I care about another." Just as in a partnership, each partner feels that "your business is my business and the matter affects us both."

See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 6, in reply to the claim, "I have saved myself."

12. Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, the Mittlerer Rebbe, lived in the same house as his father the Alter Rebbe, only the Alter Rebbe occupied the second floor and Rabbi DovBer the first floor. The Mittlerer Rebbe was well known for his great powers of concentration and when he was learning or praying, no distraction would disturb him. Once, when the Mittlerer Rebbe was learning, his small son who was sleeping in a cot in

follows that one who is actively engaged in fulfilling this *mitzvah* is connected to the entire Torah.¹³ One may not think, “I have saved my own soul so there is no necessity to worry about anybody else,” for this is the opposite of *ahavas Yisrael*.¹⁴

Self-Sacrifice for Outreach

A JEW MUST HAVE SELF-SACRIFICE TO SPREAD YIDDISHKEIT NOT ONLY within his immediate circle, but for all those in his environs, for all those in his town, and for all those in his country. Why is it his responsibility? Because the Torah states, “Love your fellow as yourself.” Far from transcending reason, the rationale is clear: Just as a person invests great effort to insure the health of one of his limbs, with the same intensity he also invests great effort in his other limbs. Since all Jews, says the *Talmud*, are limbs of one and the same body, the good of the other is really one’s own good. Contemplation in this matter will lead one to have self-sacrifice to spread *Yiddishkeit*.

the same room, fell out of the cot. The Mittler Rebbe was so immersed in his learning that he failed to hear the child cry. Although the Alter Rebbe was learning on the second floor, he heard the cry of the child, interrupted his learning, and went down to the Mittler Rebbe’s room and soothed the child. The Mittler Rebbe was so immersed, he noticed neither his father nor the child. After a while, at an appropriate time, the Alter Rebbe rebuked his son and told him that one should never be so immersed in one’s learning so as not to hear the cry of a child. This story teaches us an important lesson: There are many “children” today who have fallen out of the cradle of Judaism. We should never be so immersed in our own affairs so as not to hear the inner soul cry of these children who are thirsting for Torah and *mitzvos* (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 6, p. 264).

13. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, p. 446.

14. *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 443. All Israel are responsible for each other. The *Midrash* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 4:6) commenting on the verse in *Yirmeyahu* 50:17, “Israel are scattered sheep,” states: “Just like all the limbs of a sheep feel it when a sheep is hit on the head or on another limb, so, too, when one Jew sins, all Jews feel it.” The *Midrash* continues: “Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai taught: One can compare this to a group of people sitting on a ship. One of the group takes out a drill and starts drilling a hole in his place. The others protest, but the man retorts, ‘What difference does it make to you if I drill a hole in my place? I am not making a hole in your place!’ They replied to him, ‘Will not the water rise and sink the whole ship?!’”

See also *Hisvaadiyus* 5746, *Parshas Kedoshim*, that one who stands idly by, ignoring the spiritual drowning of those around him without making any effort to save them, transgresses the prohibition of “Thou shall not stand idly by thy brother’s blood.”

On a deeper level, when one contemplates what was stated above in *Tanya*, that each soul is a part of the Divine and comes from the same source, then it becomes clear that, in actuality, helping another soul deeply affects G-d Himself. When one soul is lost or missing something, this affects G-d. In all of our troubles, the *Shechinah* is with us. So, too, a soul in need of help is a part of the Divine awaiting redemption. The energy behind one's activities in spreading *Yiddishkeit* will obviously be heightened by contemplating that this effort helps to bring about the complete revelation of the Divine in the world below.¹⁵

A Personal Mission

WELL KNOWN IS THE TALMUDIC LAW THAT "THE EMISSARY OF A PERSON IS considered as the person himself." In the area of outreach, every Jew must realize that although he is a part of one large national Jewish soul, each individual soul was sent by G-d to the earth in a particular time and a particular place with a specific mission to fulfill. Each soul is to be viewed as a personal emissary of the Divine whose mission is to create "an abode for G-d in the lowest of all worlds,"¹⁶ each one in his or her place.¹⁷ Every person is obligated to use his talents in the fulfillment of this mission and in his efforts in outreach.

The obligation to bring Jews closer to Judaism rests upon every Jew, no matter what his individual standing: no one is exempt. Whether one is on the highest spiritual level, or one has just begun to swim in the sea of the Torah, each must do his part according to his individual capabilities. A Jew cannot lock himself away in the privacy of his own devotions for fear of being sullied by contact with those of less lofty standards; nor can he excuse himself with protests of inadequacy. If one is fortunate enough to be in possession of that which is "our life

15. *Hisvaadiyus* 5745, Vol. 3, p. 1423.

16. See *Midrash Tanchuma Nasso* 7:1 *Tanya*, ch. 36.

17. See *Hisvaadiyus* 5745, Vol. 1, p. 490.

and the length of our days,"¹⁸ i.e., Torah and *mitzvos*, he must share it with others.

A person was once in private audience with the Lubavitcher Rebbe and the Rebbe asked him not only to learn Torah but also to teach Torah. The man replied that he only knows the *alef-beis* to which the Rebbe responded that his mission is to take a Jew who only knows an *alef* and teach him *beis*!

Privilege and Responsibility

NEVERTHELESS, WE MUST GO FURTHER. A JEW'S MISSION IN THIS WORLD IS to make of it a dwelling place for G-d,¹⁹ to elevate and sanctify the physical; in short, to serve G-d in all ways. This is the purpose of a soul's descent from the lofty spiritual realms to this corporeal world. Each soul has a specific task, its particular contribution towards making the world a fit abode for G-dliness. As quoted earlier, the Baal Shem Tov once said that a soul may come into the world and live for seventy or eighty years, just to do a favor for a Jew in either physical or spiritual matters. Your assistance to another may be the fulfillment of *your* mission in life; the reason *your* soul was sent down to this earth.

Hence, when one approaches another Jew to encourage him to return to the ways of his forebears, the approach must be made with humility and an awareness of the privilege he has been granted. One Jew is not superior to another because he happened to have the good fortune of being born into a religious family. *Every* Jew is precious, for, as the Baal Shem Tov said, G-d's love for each Jew is as the love parents have for an only child born to them in their old age. Each Jew is like the only child of the King of kings, and the King keeps a vigilant eye on how His child is treated. You are not doing that person a favor per se; rather, G-d is granting you the great privilege of helping His child! It is an awesome responsibility and must be

18. Text of the *Maariv* prayer, *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 107.

19. *Tanya*, ch. 36.

treated with utmost seriousness. G-d has many messengers with which to fulfill His wishes, or G-d Himself could heal this child of his spiritual ills. Yet you have been given the task. G-d has had compassion for your spiritual level, and is giving you, through the merit of helping another Jew, the opportunity to elevate yourself to a loftier position.

It is thus clear that not only may one not despise his fellow for being alien to his religion, but one must approach him with the utmost respect and consideration befitting the only child of the King of kings. No vilification, G-d forbid. No derogatory statements. No superior airs. Only love and peace, good will and graciousness.

Success

THE REBBE WRITES THAT THERE IS A “COVENANT” ESTABLISHED WITH effort and publicity — that they shall never be without fruit.²⁰ It is not always for us to see the results of our actions. We are “day workers” and we must be concerned primarily with the work itself, and with dedication and patience, the fruits will show. Not every effort in *kiruv* will be immediately successful; nevertheless, regardless of the results, one has still fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael* and will receive a reward for loving one’s fellow man.²¹

If all *mitzvos* must be performed with great intensity, how much more so *ahavas Yisrael*, which is “the foundation of the entire Torah.” One must try to persuade other Jews to keep Torah and *mitzvos*, and if there is no initial success, one must try again. Even if the recipient reacts strongly, one should not be deterred; on the contrary, the fact that there has been a

20. *HaYom Yom*, p. 31.

21. *Tanya*, ch. 32. The Rebbe in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 22, p. 31, note 19, says further that since the Alter Rebbe has revealed that nothing has been lost through the effort, then on the contrary if one follows in this vein there will be a great reward since one is following the directive of the Alter Rebbe and therefore becoming connected with him, similar to the Talmudic statement in *Sukkah* 32b, “Since it was a statement of R. Kahana,...”

reaction is a sign that he has been touched.²² One should try time and time again until one succeeds. True, the presentation must be pleasant — as the Previous Rebbe once put it, “One should not rip the other’s nose off” — however it must be with conviction. A combination of pleasantness and intensity will ultimately succeed. If in the interim it does not, then the blame lies not with the recipient but with him. Words that come from the heart enter the heart. If one’s words did not penetrate the other’s heart, it must be that they did not emanate from the heart. Try again!²³

Furthermore, one is assured of success, for one is not battling against a foe, and the goal is not the conversion of something bad to something good. The quintessence of a Jew is his soul, a soul that is always connected with its source. No matter how distant a Jew is from his religion, it is only an illusory separation. Beneath the layers of indifference that have enveloped a Jew, the soul still shines, untouched and untouchable. One need but remove the layers, and the soul is revealed.

22. See *Kuntres HaTefillah*, ch. 8; *Toras Shalom*, p. 10.

23. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 128. The verse in *Vayikra* 19:17 states: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall reprove your fellow and do not bear a sin because of him.” *Rasbi* comments, “Although you are required to reprove wrongdoers, you will be sinning if you do it the wrong way. Be careful not to embarrass them.” In a letter (*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 2, p. 475), the Previous Rebbe makes the following observation: Before any rebuke is given, the person giving the rebuke must cleanse himself from any feeling of hatred and replace it with a feeling of love. Only then can the rebuke be given in the proper manner. If he then sees that the rebuke has not been effective, the Torah says, “Do not bear a sin because of him,” i.e., do not say that the person being rebuked is to blame, rather blame yourself, for it could be that either: 1) the words of rebuke did not come from the heart, or 2) the condition, “do not hate your brother” had not been fulfilled.

See also *Likkutei Dibburim* (Heb.), Vol. 1, pp. 120, 121, that one must rebuke oneself before one rebukes another. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim 5708*, p. 252, *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. 7, p. 270.

In another letter (*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 3, p. 291), the Previous Rebbe writes that giving rebuke is comparable to administering an injection. In preparation, the area must be cleansed and the needle sterile. An unclean area or non-sterile needle could put the patient in great danger. So, too, by a *Chassidische farbrengen*, which is the medicine for many of our ailments, the words must be administered in truth and out of love without any burning or unclean substances.

This can be illustrated with a simple parable: Words can be written with ink on paper (or parchment), or engraved in stone. In both cases, the words can be removed or filled in. The ink can be erased from the paper, and the engraving can be filled in to obscure the letters. The difference is that the ink and the paper are two separate entities, and once the ink is removed, new writing is necessary to provide new words. But in the case of the engraving, the letters are part of the stone, and one need but remove the silt which has filled the indentations to reveal the original letters.

A Jewish soul is an engraving. A Jew's connection to G-d is etched upon his soul, an inseparable part of his very being. Torah is not something separate from the Jew, but part of his essence. If, G-d forbid, a Jew has become alienated from the Torah, and the letters of the Torah engraved upon his soul have become filled with the silt of coarseness and materialism, one need only remove the silt, and the letters stand revealed. A Jew, by nature, wants to serve G-d. We have been chosen as nothing more than the instrument with which to remove the concealments and lay bare the reality which was always present. In our work of spreading Torah and *mitzvos* we need but make the first move, reach out a hand, and he will come running to grasp it. The quintessential spark of Judaism within every Jew, which until now has been dormant, will ignite into a flaming torch of longing for G-d.

No Compromise

IT MUST ALSO BE POINTED OUT THAT OUR *MISHNAH* SAYS, "DRAW THEM NEAR to the Torah" and not "draw the Torah near to them." This means that all efforts made to bring a Jew closer to Torah must be in keeping with the laws of Torah and the *Shulchan Aruch* —

the Code of Jewish Law.²⁴ The Torah should never be diluted or compromised in order to achieve success in outreach.²⁵

In a letter concerning the sailing of passenger ships on *Shabbos* the Rebbe writes:

There are those who claim that due to the responsibility to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael* and to support Jews wherever they are and in particular in Israel — the land upon which the eyes of G-d are fixed from the beginning of the year until the end — it should be permitted in order to help Israel's economic situation.

I responded with the well-known aphorism of the Previous Rebbe who, when also asked a similar question, responded with a parable: One can compare this to putting out a fire. The person who puts out the fire is not particular that the water

24. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 100.

25. A story is told of a certain outreach worker who was very successful in his work but did certain things not in accordance with the *Shulchan Aruch*. This worker entered the Rebbe's study for a private audience with him. After praising the work being done, the Rebbe then asked the person why he did certain things not according to the *Shulchan Aruch*. He replied, "You see that it is successful; just look at the success rate and this will justify the means." The Rebbe then said that those things that were done according to the *Shulchan Aruch* were *mekarev* (drew them near), and those things that were done not according to the *Shulchan Aruch* were only *merachek* (pushed them away).

A number of points may be learned from this story:

1. One must be consistent. One cannot possibly convince a person to embrace Torah in its totality at the very moment one is abrogating certain laws.
2. One should never think that one will be more successful by doing something that is forbidden by the *Shulchan Aruch*; on the contrary, the forbidden action only serves to push away the person you wish to be *mekarev*.
3. The proper way to rebuke. First the Rebbe praised and then he rebuked.

See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 12, p. 204, where the Rebbe answers a letter regarding those who are dissatisfied with the way *Chabad* conducts *kiruv*. He writes that one should avoid arguments, for many would criticize whatever you do. Others do not understand a fundamental difference between *Chabad* and some other organizations. *Chabad* conducts itself according to the imperative of the Sages which the Alter Rebbe quotes in *Tanya*: "Love the creations and draw them near to the Torah." Some other organizations believe in drawing the Torah near to the creations. How can somebody who doesn't realize the fundamental difference in these two approaches possibly voice an opinion on such a matter?! In fact, those who argue with *Chabad* on this matter do not pay sufficient attention to the first part of the words of the Sages ("Love the creations"). Furthermore, one who contemplates the greatness of extracting something precious from waste (see *Bava Metzia* 85a) will easily be able to accept attempts to discredit, etc.

should be clean and fit for drinking, rather any water will do. However, if somebody comes along and wishes to extinguish the fire with gasoline — with the claim that it is also a liquid — then not only will it not have any use, it will cause further destruction. So too, one who wishes to help another Jew (and how much more so many Jews) in a way that does not comply with the Torah — a Torah that gives life — then not only is this not considered help, but on the contrary, it is destructive.”²⁶

The Torah in Its Entirety

ONE SHOULD ALSO PRESENT THE TORAH IN ITS ENTIRETY AND NEVER GIVE the impression that some *mitzvos* are not so applicable in the modern day. The correct approach is to explain that a Jew is obligated to keep all 613 *mitzvos*,²⁷ and one should gently ask that at least one *mitzvah* be performed immediately.²⁸ This one *mitzvah* should preferably be one of the principal *mitzvos* such as: *abavas Yisrael*, Torah education, learning Torah, *tefillin*, *mezuzah*, *tzedakah*, filling one’s house with holy books, lighting Shabbos candles, *kasbrus*, and *tabaras hamishpachob*.

The rule is that “One *mitzvah* brings about another,”²⁹ and through the keeping of one *mitzvah* this will lead him to keep another until all the *mitzvos* will be kept.

When one sees a Jew who previously has not been observant and who feels that because of his past actions he cannot relate to a life of Torah; who therefore feels despondent and does not wish to keep any *mitzvos* — he feels he is a “lost”

26. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 11, p. 352.

27. And to explain the principle of faith that “This Torah shall never be changed,” the ninth of the *Ramban’s* “Thirteen Principles of Faith.” See also *Ramban, Hilchos Yesodai HaTorah*, ch. 9:1; *Hilchos Melachim*, ch. 11:3; *Commentary on the Mishnah Sanhedrin, Cheilek* No. 9.

28. Even a Jew who does not want to keep the *mitzvos* is still obligated to keep all the *mitzvos*, and all Israel are obligated because of the fact that each Jew is a guarantor for the other, to rebuke the other — even until 100 times — to keep the *mitzvos*. See *Ramban Iggeres Hashmad*, “The fourth type,” and *Iggeres Teiman*, “And we should take joy,” in reference to Yeravom. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p. 357, note 49.

29. *Pirkei Avos* 4:2.

Jew — he should be encouraged and informed that it is possible to change from one extreme to another in a moment. This is not just an encouragement, but a *halachic* ruling.³⁰ By starting with one *mitzvah* — particularly one of the above-mentioned principal *mitzvos* — that *mitzvah* itself will refine him enough to bring him to keep another and eventually all the *mitzvos*.³¹

A Lesson From the *Arba Minim* — the Four Species³²

THE TORAH INSTRUCTS US THAT ON THE FIRST DAY OF SUKKOS WE SHOULD take “a fruit of the citron tree (an *esrog*), the branches of a date palm (a *lulav*), myrtle branches (*badassim*), and willows that grow near a brook (*aravos*).”³³

It is noteworthy that in reference to the first three of the species, i.e., the *esrog*, *lulav* and *badassim*, the Torah implicitly gives a description that invalidates other variant species, for example:

The fruit of the citron tree (esrog): The *esrog* must be a “perfect fruit”³⁴ and must also be *hadar* (“beautiful”); a dry *esrog* is invalid.³⁵

Branches of a date palm: A *lulav* must have branches that are “*kapos*,” i.e., that can be bent and tied, not brittle.³⁶ According to the Rogatchover Gaon,³⁷ the Torah details “date” palms to emphasize that it is not sufficient for a *lulav* to come from a tree that is from the palm family, rather a *lulav* must come from a tree that actually produces dates.³⁸

30. *Kiddushin* 49b; *Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer* 38:31.

31. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, pp.357-8.

32. *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 132.

33. *Emor* 23:40.

34. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim* 648:29.

35. See *Sukkah* 31a, 34b; *Shulchan Aruch, ibid.*, 645:2.

36. *Sukkah* 31a; *Shulchan Aruch, ibid.* 645:3.

37. *Tzafnas Panei'ach* on the *Rambam, Hilchos Lulav* 7:1. For a full analysis of all the variant opinions, see the book entitled *The Canaree Lulav* (Jerusalem, 5738).

38. With this premise, the Rogatchover explains the statement of the Sages in *Menachos* 27a that two of the four *minim* (i.e., the *esrog* and *lulav*) produce fruit. Superficially this appears difficult, for the *badas* also produces fruit? However the

Myrtle branches: The *badas* must be “*ovos*,” i.e., it must have three leaves on one stem.³⁹ If not, it is invalid.

However, regarding the *aravos*, the fourth of the *Arba Minim*, although the Torah states that they must be “willows that grow by a brook,” the *halachah* is that even if the willow does not actually grow by a brook but comes from a willow that belongs to the family of willows that usually grow by a brook, then it is valid.⁴⁰

This requires explanation: Why is it that when the Torah describes the first three of the species, it is detailed and exact — to the exclusion of variant *minim* — while regarding the *aravos*, the Torah just gives a general guideline about the species?

It is well known that many ideas in the Torah are difficult to explain in their simple sense without referring to their inner meaning.⁴¹ So too with the above matter, which needs clarification from the *Midrash* to be fully understood.

The *Midrash*⁴² tells us that the Four Species are in fact a metaphor for the four different types of Jew. The *esrog*, which possesses both taste and smell, refers to the Jew who is both learned and has good deeds. The *lulav*, which has taste but no smell, refers to the Jew who is learned but lacks in good deeds. The *badas*, which has smell but no taste, refers to the Jew who lacks in learning but possesses good deeds, and the *aravos*, which have neither smell nor taste, refers to the Jew who is both unlearned and lacks in good deeds.

The *mitzvah* of the Four Species is to bind all the different types of Jew together.

Looking at the *mitzvah* from this perspective immediately helps us to distinguish the first three species from the fourth.

meaning of the verse is that a *lulav* must come from a fruit-bearing tree whereas a *badas* may come from a non-fruit-bearing source. See *Tzafnas Panei'ach*, *ibid*.

39. *Sukkah* 32b; *Rasbi*, *ibid*.

40. *Sukkah* 33b; *Rambam*, *Hilchos Lulav* 7:3. Commentary of the *Rosh*, *Sukkah* 3:13. *Shulchan Aruch* 647:1.

41. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 19, p. 209.

42. *Vayikra Rabbah* 30:12.

The first three species (i.e., types of Jew) all have in common some revealed quality:⁴³ the *esrog* taste and smell, the *lulav* taste, and the *badas* smell, whereas the *aravah*, the Jew who has neither learning nor good deeds, has no obvious advantage except for the fact that he is a Jew. This advantage is on an essential level rather than on a revealed one, and is common to all Jews who are descended from Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. Even a *tinok shenishbbah* (see chapter 9 below) who does not even know he is Jewish also possesses a Jewish soul and is essentially a Jew.

This explains why the Torah is so exacting about the descriptions of the first three species, whereas with the *aravah*, even if this particular *aravah* did not grow by a brook — i.e., he is a *tinok shenishbbah* — as long as he belongs to the general species (i.e., he is Jewish), he is valid and in fact becomes a crucial part of the *mitzvah*.

This teaches a most important lesson:

Just as one may not perform the *mitzvah* without a *lulav* or an *esrog*, so, too, one cannot perform the *mitzvah* without the *aravos*. We must bind ourselves together with simple Jews — those who have neither learning nor good deeds. Moreover, since the simplicity of the simple Jew is connected to the simplicity of the essence of G-d,⁴⁴ it is *particularly* through the simple Jew that one connects with the essence of G-d.

Furthermore, there is a fundamental difference between how we connect with the first three species and how we connect with the *aravos*: In order for those Jews who possess learning or good deeds to qualify for their different categories, they must each possess their unique quality. It is not enough that someone born into a family of learned Jews, or one who is registered in a

43. Well known is the adage of the Rebbe Rashab (*Toras Shalom*, p. 190) that a thief is not one who knows how to steal but one who actually steals, and a *lamdan* (a learned man) is not one who knows how to learn but one who actually learns. So, too, in our case, one who possesses good deeds is not one who can potentially do good deeds but one who actually does good deeds.

44. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 3, p. 982; Vol. 4, p. 1156.

yeshiva, or one who used to learn in the past should be classified as a *lamdan* — he must actually be learned himself. He must actually possess the “taste” of learning. However when it comes to the simple Jew, there are no preconditions that he should be able to learn or keep *mitzvos* or even feel Jewish.⁴⁵ Since he is Jewish, we must connect with him because he is a Jew. Such an approach of “loving the creations” will eventually lead to “draw them near to the Torah” and such a Jew will ultimately acquire taste and smell.

Unity on such a level will eventually precipitate the final Redemption, as the Sages say: “Israel will only be redeemed when they will all form one group.”⁴⁶

A Diamond and a Descendant

WE WILL CLOSE THIS CHAPTER WITH TWO STORIES OF THE REBBE WHICH illustrate exactly how one is to view another Jew.

It is well known that on Sunday mornings the Rebbe used to distribute dollars to be given to charity. Thousands of Jews would line up each Sunday for the chance to receive a dollar and a blessing from the Rebbe. On one occasion, an older lady who had been waiting a long time blurted out to the Rebbe that she marveled at how he could stand for so many hours on his feet dispensing the dollars, as she was totally exhausted from her wait!

Replied the Rebbe, “When you are counting diamonds, you don’t get tired.”

For the Rebbe, every Jew was a diamond.

Another story was related by Mr. George Rohr at a convention for the Rebbe’s emissaries in 5757.

45. The *Taz* in *Shulchan Aruch, ibid.*, 2, comments that since the Torah permits using a willow that does not grow by a brook, it may be preferable to use such a willow to emphasize the innovation of the law. This idea may also be taken in its inner sense, that in order to emphasize the innovation of the law, it is preferable to draw near the Jew in whom it is not recognizable that he is a willow of the brook, i.e., descended from Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov.

46. *Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim*, section 1 (end).

Mr. Rohr related how, as a member of the Machne Israel Special Development Fund — a special fund established to build new Chabad centers around the world, he had the privilege to meet the Rebbe on one occasion just after Rosh Hashanah. Mr. Rohr thought that instead of asking the Rebbe for something, he would give the Rebbe a present of his own. A short time before Rosh Hashanah, he had been instrumental in setting up a beginners' service at his *shul* in Manhattan. On Rosh Hashanah, 120 Jews attended this new service. Mr. Rohr decided to announce this to the Rebbe and was sure the Rebbe would receive much *nachas* from this good news. When his turn to meet the Rebbe arrived, he confidently strode up to the Rebbe and shared with him his good news:

“Thank G-d, this Rosh Hashanah we set up a beginners' service in our *shul* and had 120 Jews with no Jewish background participate!”

Until that point the Rebbe had a broad smile on his face, but when Mr. Rohr told him the news the Rebbe's face dropped, and Mr. Rohr searched his words for anything he may have said that had upset the Rebbe.

“What?” said the Rebbe.

Mr. Rohr repeated, “...120 Jews with no Jewish background.”

“No Jewish background?” asked the Rebbe. “Go and tell those Jews that they are all children of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov.”

Now Mr. Rohr understood. The Rebbe objected to these Jews, *his children*, being described as having no Jewish background. The Rebbe pointed out that every Jew has a Jewish background, a great, illustrious background — they are the children of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov!



THE PREVIOUS REBBE ONCE SAID: WHEN TWO JEWS MEET, IN ADDITION TO THE GOOD THAT WILL BE GENERATED FROM THE MEETING FOR THEMSELVES, THEY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A FAVOR TO A THIRD PARTY WILL ALSO COME FROM THE MEETING.

(*Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. 8, p. 190)

R. AIZIK HOMILER RELATED: WHEN I CAME TO LIOZNA, I MET ELDER CHASSIDIM WHO HAD BEEN CHASSIDIM OF THE MAGGID AND OF R. MENACHEM MENDEL OF HORODOK. THEY USED TO SAY: HAVE AFFECTION FOR A FELLOW JEW AND G-D WILL HAVE AFFECTION FOR YOU. DO A KINDNESS FOR A FELLOW JEW AND G-D WILL DO A KINDNESS FOR YOU. BEFRIEND A FELLOW JEW AND G-D WILL BEFRIEND YOU.

(*HaYom Yom*, p. 108.)

CHASSIDIC DOCTRINE DEMANDS THAT BEFORE REPROVING ANOTHER, ONE MUST PARE ONE'S OWN "FINGERNAILS" IN ORDER NOT TO GASH THE OTHER. "THEY (THE FORCES OF EVIL) SEIZE BY THE FINGERNAILS." EVERY STAB IS *KELIPPAH* AND *SITRA ACHARA*. AFTER THE "NAILS" ARE PARED, THERE MUST BE "THE WASHING OF THE HANDS" AS EXPLAINED IN *CHASSIDUS* — CALLING FORTH INTELLECT INTO EMOTION.

(*HaYom Yom*, p. 89)

THE SECOND TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED BECAUSE OF BASELESS HATRED (*YOMA* 9B), A HATRED FOR NO REASON AND WITH NO SENSE. THE RECTIFICATION IS LOVE FOR NO REASON — BASELESS LOVE. ONE SHOULD LOVE ANOTHER JEW EVEN IF THERE IS NO REASON FOR THIS LOVE.

(*Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, Vol. 4, p. 440)

WHEN THE PREVIOUS REBBE WAS A CHILD, HE ONCE ASKED HIS FATHER THE REBBE RASHAB, "WHY DID G-D CREATE MAN WITH TWO EYES? WOULDN'T ONE EYE BE ENOUGH, JUST LIKE WE HAVE ONE MOUTH AND ONE NOSE?" HIS FATHER REPLIED, "THERE ARE THINGS THAT ONE MUST LOOK AT WITH THE RIGHT EYE, I.E., WITH LOVE, AND THERE ARE THINGS THAT ONE MUST LOOK AT WITH THE LEFT EYE, I.E., WITH DISTANCE. ONE MUST LOOK AT A *SIDDUR* AND ANOTHER JEW WITH THE RIGHT EYE, AND AT A SWEET AND A TOY ONE MUST LOOK WITH THE LEFT EYE.

(*Sefer HaToldos* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 1, p. 8)

IN *MEGILLAS ESTHER* IT IS WRITTEN: "MORDECHAI, THE SON OF SHIMI THE SON OF KISH ISH YEMINI." THE PREVIOUS REBBE ONCE EXPLAINED WHY MORDECHAI WAS CALLED AN *ISH YEMINI* — LITERALLY, A MAN OF THE RIGHT. EVERY JEW HAS TWO EYES: THE RIGHT, TO LOOK AT ANOTHER FAVORABLY; AND THE LEFT TO LOOK AT ONESELF CRITICALLY. MORDECHAI MERITED TO BE A LEADER OF ISRAEL BECAUSE HE WAS AN "ISH YEMINI," I.E., HE ALWAYS LOOKED AT ANOTHER JEW FAVORABLY.

(*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5701, p. 74)

"LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF": MAKE SURE "YOUR FELLOW" BECOMES A LAMPLIGHTER, LIKE "YOURSELF."

(*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 21, p. 362)

EVERY JEW IS PRECIOUS TO G-D, EVEN MORE THAN AN ONLY SON BORN TO ELDERLY PARENTS (*KESSER SHEM TOV*, *HOSAFOS*, SEC. 133). EVERY JEW IS OUR CONCERN AND IT IS OUR OBLIGATION TO REVEAL HIS TRUE ESSENCE.

(*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 22, p. 196)

Chapter 9

OUR GENERATION: THE *TINOK SHENISHBAH*

THE TALMUD¹ DISCUSSES THE CASE OF A “*TINOK SHENISHBAH BEIN HA’AKUM*” — a child raised from infancy amongst gentiles and who therefore has no understanding of Judaism. Such a person is not held accountable for not living in accordance with the Torah because he cannot be blamed for his lack of belief and observance.

The *Rambam*, in a well-known comment regarding the children of the sectarian group the Karaites, elucidates an issue that can be relevant for us in this generation as well:

“However the children and the grandchildren of these errants, whose parents have misled them, those who have been born among the Karaites, who have reared them in their views; each is like a child who has been taken captive among them, who has been reared by them, and is not alacritous in seizing the paths of the commandments; his status is comparable to that of one who has been coerced. Even though he later learns that he is a Jew and becomes acquainted with Jews and [the Jewish] religion, he is nevertheless to be regarded as a person who is coerced, for he was reared in the erroneous ways [of his parents]. Thus it is of the children and grandchildren of the karaites who adhere to the practices of their Karaite parents who have erred. Therefore it is proper to cause them to return in repentance and to draw them near with words of peace until they return to the strength-giving Torah.”²

1. *Shabbos* 68b; *Shvuos* 5a.

2. *Rambam*, *Hilchos Mamrim* 3:3. See also *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh De'ab* 159:3, *Beis Yosef* and *Darkei Moshe*, *ibid.* *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *Hilchos Ribbis*, *halachos* 79, 80.

Many *halachic* authorities have applied this reasoning of the *Rambam* to all contemporary Jews who have been educated in a secular, agnostic/atheistic environment: all are to be considered a *tinok shenishbah*. The reader who wishes to read a full review of all opinions on this matter is referred to the book *The Tinok Shenishbah* written by Rabbi Chaim Rapoport for the London Beth Din in 5757. Rabbi Rapoport's book also deals extensively with the issues of the *tinok shenishbah* vis-à-vis inclusion in a *minyan* and eligibility for an *aliyah*, etc. The reader is also referred to the book³ *Chassidic Dimensions: The Dynamics of Ahavas Yisrael* by Rabbi J. I. Schochet, who also deals extensively with the *halachic* aspects of this matter.⁴ In this chapter we shall limit ourselves to quotes from the Rebbes of *Chabad* on this subject. As a result, the source material presented is not exhaustive but will suffice to present the opinion of *Chabad*.

The Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, writes in a letter:⁵

In our generation there are, thank G-d, hardly any heretics or *apikorsim* at all, because the terms “*min*” or “*apikores*” apply to those who deny Torah and *mitzvos* as a result of heretical theology; this was the case when there were *baalei seichel* (accomplished intellectuals) who were involved in intellectual investigation, but nowadays — even those people who are completely irreligious — the majority of them are very distant from true intellectual investigation and they just follow the opinions of those who deny the truth. The real reason that they do not keep the *mitzvos* is, by and large, because it is easier that way. It is not done, however,

3. Kehot Publications, 1990.

4. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 27, p. 368, where the Rebbe responds in a letter to somebody who wished to put all Jews in three categories according to his understanding of *Tanya*, ch. 32. The Rebbe clarifies the issue by making reference to today's secular Jews vis-à-vis the meaning of the Alter Rebbe's reference to *minim* and *apikorsim*.

5. *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe Vol. 2, p. 526.

with the intention to rebel, G-d forbid. Even when transgressing negative commandments, it is not *lebachis*, i.e., to arouse anger, but rather to fulfill their desires.

Therefore, even though they may compare in their actions to those whom the Alter Rebbe wrote in *Tanya* that it is a *mitzvah* to hate, i.e., to the *apikorsim*, in reality, looking at their true status, one should consider them in the category of those whom the Alter Rebbe says that a love/hate relationship must prevail ... and therefore, in truth, they should without too much difficulty be able to return to *HaShem*.

This has actually been demonstrated in that, thank G-d, many (and many more) have done *teshuvah*, and in particular those who were conceived and born into homes that are very remote from Judaism. They were educated without any *Yiddishkeit* and naturally followed the ways of those who removed the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos* [from themselves], but now have come under the influence of Orthodox Jews and have been influenced. In particular, if they were aroused in the correct manner, they have accepted it with all their hearts — and I know of such people. And since every Jew is very precious, even where there exists a doubt, one must exert all efforts to draw them near....

Even in this matter one must, however, conduct oneself according to the Torah and not to one's own intellect. One should draw the other nearer to oneself and not let oneself be drawn to the other.... Many make a mistake in this matter with bad results, and it must be stressed that all efforts in the area of *kiruv* must be only in the ways of the Torah.

Strengthen the Nation

ON SHABBOS *PARSHAS VAYECHI* 5751, THE REBBE ELABORATED ON THE theme of *tinok shenisbbah* and stressed that in this generation we must always seek to strengthen and look favorably upon our brethren.

“...And from this point we learn a lesson how to strengthen the *bnei Yisrael* in the time of exile, particularly in this long exile, which because of its length has been much more difficult than all other exiles, and therefore it becomes more necessary to give strength and encouragement.

“The strengthening of *bnei Yisrael* is achieved through announcing: ‘And Yaakov lived,’ that ‘Yaakov our Patriarch did not die ... just as his seed lives, so too he is living,’ i.e., to emphasize the true level of each and every Jew — the seed of Yaakov — that he is a ‘Jew’ and therefore notwithstanding his standing and revealed situation, he can and needs to reveal his true level through doing *teshuvah* and keeping Torah and *mitzvos* — that is the way to strengthen and encourage.

“However when one stresses and emphasizes the disadvantage of those who are non-observant, also adding warnings of punishment and retribution, Heaven forbid, not only is this not the way to strengthen the keeping of Torah and *mitzvos*, rather it weakens observance and distances the non-observant from doing *teshuvah*. Particularly in this generation, the *only* way to draw the hearts of *bnei Yisrael* closer to our Father in Heaven is to rebuke in ways of pleasantness and peace with *ahavas Yisrael*.⁶

6. “As Moshe who loved them rebuked them” (*Devarim Rabbah* 1:4). See also *Kedushas Levi*, *Parshas Bereishis* where he explains the statement of the Sages (*Bereishis Rabbah* 2 ff.) “(G-d) desires the acts of the righteous and does not desire the acts of the wicked,” to mean, the “acts of the wicked” refers to G-dly service amidst hate and anger to those who transgress G-d’s word, and G-d prefers and desires the “acts of the righteous,” i.e., the acts of the righteous who draw near the entire world to serve the Creator through pleasant words and not with anger, for the way and attribute of G-d is goodness and He desires that all be brought near to Him through good.

See also *Kedushas Levi* in *Parshas Chukas*: There are two categories of people who rebuke. One rebukes with goodly words, i.e., he tells each Jew of his great advantages

“This is all important in this generation in which those who are until now non-observant are in the category of a *tinok shenishbah*, and their status is as clearly ruled by Maimonides as quoted above; as the *Rambam* says — it is correct to bring them to do *teshuvah* and to draw them with peaceful words until they return to the strength of the Torah.

“Another fundamental point in not speaking derogatorily about *bnei Yisrael* — and particularly not mentioning words of impending retribution (which because of the imperative, ‘Do not open your mouth,’ it would not be right in repeating them, in addition to the negative effects it would have in *kiruv* as mentioned before) is that such words are completely untrue and the opposite of ‘respect’ for G-d and the opposite of ‘respect’ for the Jews.

“The opposite of the truth:

“Maimonides rules:⁷ ‘This balancing of iniquity and merit is not according to the number of sins or merits but according to their greatness. There is such merit that balances many sins, etc., and this balance can only be balanced with Divine Judgment; He who knows the true valuation of merits vis-à-vis debits.’

“In our case: Since, as mentioned above, those who are non-observant until now are in the category of a *tinok shenishbah*, who is like one who has been compelled or forced, the rule is that ‘Torah exempts one who is forced.’⁸ On the other hand, when a *tinok shenishbah* keeps even one *mitzvah* — and definitely one who keeps many *mitzvos* — as the Sages⁹ have

and of the source of his soul, and of the great pleasure G-d derives from the *mitzvos* of each person ... and others rebuke with stern and critical words.... The difference between them is that he who rebukes with good words elevates the Jewish soul and constantly talks of the righteousness and the greatness of Israel — how great are these words considered above in Heaven — such a person is worthy of being a leader in Israel. However one who rebukes in the other manner is not of this league.

7. *Hilchos Teshevah* 3:2.

8. *Bava Kamma* 28b.

9. *Chagigah* (end).

testified that there is no man of Israel who has not kept many *mitzvos*¹⁰ — this is surely very precious and beloved by G-d!

“Furthermore, it is particularly in this generation that there has been an arousal amongst the *tinokos shenishbbu* to return to the ways of Torah and *mitzvos*, to the extent that tens of thousands of Jews have become observant, and this number is increasing.

“Who therefore has the right to weigh in his own human — of flesh and blood — mind the weight of the sins of this generation and to pronounce that because of these sins will come retribution. G-d forbid such a thing. This is the opposite of that which the Torah rules: that these people are in the category of a *tinok shenishbbab* whom Torah exempts!

“The opposite of Heavenly honor:

“To describe G-d as One who sits and calculates the number of sins and waits until there is enough to take retribution, G-d forbid, and then when punishment is exacted again starts counting, etc., this is surely the opposite of respect for G-d, as it gives the impression that G-d can be compared to a cruel king who is waiting to punish. This is in fact the opposite of the truth that G-d is a ‘Merciful Father’ as explicitly stated in numerous verses, particularly in the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.¹¹

“G-d is primarily engaged in creating additional *simchahs* for the Jewish people, as the *Midrash*¹² states: ‘What has G-d been doing since creation until now? He has been making *shiduchim!*’ i.e., creating additional brides and grooms and fulfilling the command of ‘Be fruitful and multiply’ by creating more children¹³ — which is connected with the *simchah* of the

10. See *Torah Or, Mikeitz* p. 31c: “There is no man among Israel who has not honored G-d in such a manner — as Nebuchadnezzar who took three steps in the honor of G-d — and all the good of this world is fitting for him.” See also *Iggeres HaShmad* of the *Rambam*, ch. 3.

11. *Shemos* 34:6-7; *Rashi*, *ibid.*; *Rosh HaShanah* 17b; *Mechilta*, *Beshalach* 15:2.

12. *Bereishis Rabbah* 68:4.

13. Which includes also the *simchah* of *bris milah* (see *Shabbos* 130a).

Redemption¹⁴ — the marriage of G-d and the Jewish people¹⁵ as it says in the wedding blessings, ‘Speedily ... will be heard in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of delight, and the voice of joy, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride.’¹⁶

“Moreover, when the A-lmighty does punish for sins — after He has been abundantly patient¹⁷ — the punishment is not G-d forbid a revenge, rather it is for the good of the person, in order to cleanse and purify him from the impurity of the sin.¹⁸ In the words of the Alter Rebbe:¹⁹ ‘Like a merciful father who is wise and righteous who strikes his son ... like a great and awesome king who himself washes the excrement off his only son out of his great love for him.’

“And since this cleansing is done out of love, it causes pain to G-d and He also shouts, ‘Woe to Me...’,²⁰ ‘I (G-d) am with man in all his troubles.’²¹

“The opposite of honor to the Jewish people:

“Since the *bnei Yisrael* are the children of G-d, as it says explicitly in the verse,²² ‘You are children to the L-rd your G-d,’ and additionally referred to as ‘My son, My firstborn Israel,’²³ and the A-lmighty loves them as it says,²⁴ ‘I love you, says G-d,’ and as the Baal Shem Tov taught,²⁵ that the love of the A-lmighty to every one of Israel is greater than the love of

14. As the *Talmud* (*Yevamos* 62a) states that “the son of David will only arrive when all the souls have entered into a body (*guf*).” Others translate *guf* to mean a storehouse called *guf*. See *Rashi* and other commentaries, *ibid*.

15. *Shemos Rabbah* 15 (end).

16. *Yirmeyahu* 33:10-11.

17. See *Talmud Yerushalmi, Taanis* 2:1.

18. See *Kuzari, Maamar Sheni*, ch.44; *Ikkarim, Maamar Revi'i*, ch. 38; *Likkutei Torah, Korach*, p. 53d, *Mattos* 86b; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 22, p. 71.

19. *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epsitile 22.

20. *Yirmeyahu* 10:19; *Pesichta of Eichab Rabbah* 24.

21. *Tehillim* 91:15. See *Taanis* 16a; *Chagigah* 15b; *Yesayahu* 63:9 and comments of *Rashi* and *Metzudas Dovid*, *ibid. Mecbilta, Beshallach* (end).

22. *Devarim* 14:1.

23. *Shemos* 4:22.

24. *Malachi* 1:2; See also *Hoshea* 11:1.

25. *Kesser Shem Tov Hosafos*, section 133.

elderly parents to an only child born to them in their latter years, it follows that G-d does not wish to hear derogative words regarding His people, and such words are insulting as it says in the verse in *Zechariah*²⁶ ‘One who touches you is as if he has touched the apple of His (G-d’s) eye.’

“Even the prophets of whom it is said²⁷ that, ‘The spirit of the L-rd spoke in them and His word was on their tongue,’ are warned that, ‘The A-lmighty does not desire one who speaks badly of His people.’²⁸ We find that Yeshayahu, one of the greatest of the prophets,²⁹ was punished when he said, ‘and in the midst of a people of impure lips I dwell.’³⁰

“Maimonides, in his famous epistle *Iggeres HaShmad*, writes: ‘If the pillars of the world (i.e., the Prophets) were punished for speaking unfavorably of the people, how much more so less important personalities who loosen their tongue against communities of Israel to call them wicked... Any orator should not speak in public until he has reviewed what he wishes to say a number of times ... and how much more so the written word should be reviewed a thousand times....’

“It is also important to bear in mind the warning the Torah gives us about ‘not opening our mouth to the Satan.’³¹ Strong words can arouse the Divine attribute of judgment and bring about punishment, whereas with good words and seeking merit in the people, one causes that G-d accepts this merit.³² An example of this concept is found with Gideon,³³ in whose days

26. 2:12.

27. *Samuel* 2:23:2.

28. *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:6:1. See also *Zobar Chadasb, Noach*, p. 23a.

29. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu, Remez* 385; see also *Chagigah* 13b.

30. *Yeshayahu* 6:5. *Shir HaShirim Rabbah, ibid.* See also *Iggeres HaShmad* of the *Rambam*, ch.2.

31. *Berachos* 19a; *Kesubos* 8b; *Maharsba, Chidushei Aggados, ibid.* See also *Rama, Yoreh De'ab* 376:2. *Shulchan Aruch Harav, Choshen Mishpat*, laws of guarding the body and soul, para. 12.

32. Even when a Divine decree has been leveled — as the Sages say in *Shabbos* 63a that even if G-d makes a decree, a *tzaddik* has the power to overturn it — by seeking merits in the people.

33. See *Midrash Tanchuma, Shoftim* 4.

Israel was in great danger and the Almighty was looking for a person who would see merit in them.... As soon as Gideon saw merit in them an angel appeared to him. It was only in the merit of Gideon seeking merit in the people that they were redeemed.³⁴

“We find many examples in Jewish history of great leaders seeking merits for the Jewish people even though they were on a spiritual low. How much more so in our generation where the only reason why Jews are not more observant is because they are ‘forced,’ and in the category of a *tinok shenishbah*, it is not necessary to search for merits for the merits are obvious. Each and every *mitzvah* today, whether in thought, word or deed, is very precious, and multiplied manifold is the merit of the vast *teshuvah* movement which is growing in momentum.

“Most important on the agenda is that all this positive merit should hasten the Redemption. The *Talmud*³⁵ already states that ‘All the end dates for *Mashiach*’s arrival have passed.’ This was true in the times of the *Talmud*, how much more so today after a lengthy and difficult exile lasting longer than 1900 years and *Mashiach* has still not come!

“As regards *teshuvah* — (as the *Talmud*³⁶ states that *Mashiach*’s arrival is dependent on *teshuvah*) — the Jewish people have already done *teshuvah*, for there is no member of the people who did not have a ‘thought of *teshuvah*’ at least once in their lives (if not many times), and with one thought of *teshuvah* one can be transformed in a moment³⁷ from a complete *rasha* to a perfect *tzaddik*, as the *Talmud*³⁸ rules that one who betroths a woman on the condition that he is a (perfect³⁹) *tzaddik*, even if we know him to be a *rasha*, he is considered married because perhaps he had a thought of *teshuvah*.

34. *Yalkut Shimoni, Shofim, Remez* 62.

35. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 129a.

38. *Kiddushin* 49b; *Rambam, Hilchos Isbus* 8:5; *Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer* 38:31.

39. See textual reading of the *Or Zarua* 12.

“In light of all the above, *Mashiach* should and needs to come immediately. And in addition to all the above, many prominent rabbis in this generation have issued a *halachic* ruling that *Mashiach* needs to come immediately, and since Torah is ‘not in the heavens,’⁴⁰ the *halachic* ruling of an earthly court can force the Heavenly Court to confirm with the ruling!

“One further point: ‘Closing the Satan’s mouth’ on this issue and looking meritoriously at the Jewish people is of particular relevance to this generation.

“In the *Haftorah* of Shabbos Chanukah which is taken from the prophecies of *Zechariah*,⁴¹ it is written: ‘And G-d said to the Satan, “G-d shall denounce you, O Satan, and G-d Who chooses Jerusalem shall denounce you (again); this is indeed a firebrand rescued from the flames.”’ G-d denounces the Satan for wishing to bring evil upon the people. G-d declares that He chooses *Yerushalayim*. *Yerushalayim* is compound of two words:⁴² *yirah*=fear (or awe), *shalem*=perfect: *Yerushalayim*=a perfect state of awe.⁴³ The true essence of every Jew is a state of perfect awe. G-d adds in His denouncement of the Satan, ‘this is indeed a firebrand rescued from the flames,’ i.e., there are only a few of Israel remaining like a firebrand saved from the fire, and you (the Satan) want Me to destroy them?

“Of relevance to us:

“This generation, the remnant of the Holocaust in which six million Jews — may G-d avenge their blood — were killed, may be compared to a ‘firebrand rescued from the flames.’ G-d forbid therefore to speak ill of them to the extent to warn them of another holocaust! Heaven forbid it should never take place — ‘A trouble shall not appear twice.’⁴⁴

40. *Devarim* 30:12. See also *Bava Metzia* 59b.

41. *Zechariah* 3:2.

42. *Tosafos Har*, *Taanis* 16a; *Bereishis Rabbah* 56:10.

43. *Likkutei Torah*, *Re'eh*, p. 29d; *Derushei Rosh HaShanah*, p. 60b; *Shir HaShirim*, p. 6c.

44. See *Nachum* 1:9; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 306, note 55.

“Such an outburst against this generation is made sevenfold worse when it is connected with desecrating the honor of those who died in the Holocaust by stating that the Holocaust happened because of their sins.

“By way of introduction:

“There are things that happen in the world that do not happen as a punishment for sins, but rather as a result of a Divine decree that does not have any rationale in the wisdom and intellect of Torah. In reference to Rabbi Akiva who was murdered in a most horrific manner when the Romans raked his body with iron rakes — and similar horrific deaths of the Ten Martyrs — the Sages say that G-d’s response when challenged with this question was, ‘Be silent, it has risen thus in My thoughts,’⁴⁵ and ‘it is a decree before Me.’⁴⁶ In no place is G-d challenged with injustice.⁴⁷

“The prime example of this is the decree of the Covenant Between the Parts, where G-d says to Avraham,⁴⁸ ‘Know with certainty that your children shall be aliens in a land not their own; they will serve them, and they will oppress them four hundred years.’ This decree was not due to any sins, rather it was a Divine decree.⁴⁹

“So it is with the Holocaust.

“The destruction of six million Jews in such a horrific manner that surpassed the cruelty of all previous generations could not possibly be because of a punishment for sins. Even the Satan himself could not possibly find a sufficient number of sins that would warrant such genocide!

45. *Menachos* 29b.

46. Text of the *Piyut* in the *Avodah* of Yom Kippur.

47. See *Berachos* 5b.

48. *Lech Lecha* 15:13.

49. See *Sbemos Rabbah* 5:22. “And Moshe returned to G-d and he said to G-d, why have You done evil to this people...’ this is what Moshe said to G-d. I took the book of *Bereishis* and I read it and I saw the deeds of the generation of the flood and how they were judged, the generation of the Tower of Bavel and how they were judged, but this nation, what did they do that they were sent into servitude — a decree greater than all the previous generations?”

“There is absolutely no rational explanation for the Holocaust except for the fact that it was a Divine decree — definitely not the inner will of G-d — rather a moment when, ‘for a brief moment I left you.’⁵⁰ Why it happened is above human comprehension — but it is definitely not because of a punishment for sin.⁵¹

“On the contrary: All those who were murdered in the Holocaust are called ‘*Kedoshim*’ — holy ones, since they were murdered in sanctification of G-d’s Name⁵² since they were Jews⁵³ and it is only G-d who will avenge their blood. As we say on Shabbos in the *Av HaRachamim* prayer,⁵⁴ ‘...the holy communities who gave their lives for the sanctification of the Divine Name ... and avenge the spilled blood of His servants, as it is written in the Torah of Moshe ... for He will avenge the blood of His servants.... And in the Holy Writings it is said ... “Let there be known among the nations, before our eyes, the retribution of the spilled blood of Your servants.”’ G-d describes those who were sanctified as His servants⁵⁵ and

50. See *Yeshayahu* 54:7.

51. The Mittlerer Rebbe writes in *Sbaar HaTeshuvah* 5a: “The *AriZal* said explicitly that in his time, the period of destruction that had swept the Jewish world for the last nearly 500 years (from the year 4856 in the days of *Rasbi* until the expulsion from Portugal in the year 5252) had ended. All those who had given up their lives in each generation (as the details of the events of that terrible 500-year period are explained at length in the *sefer Shevet Yehudah*) were all souls that had been in the era of the First Temple. They were all great men with very elevated souls. They all served G-d ... only they were also idolators, and they all did not receive rectification for their souls until the times of the philosophers in the days of *Rasbi* and the *Rambam*, until the times of the *AriZal*. Since their sin was idolatry, the rectification was self-sacrifice for G-d’s name with pure faith that transcends human intellect ... however, in the times of the *AriZal* they had all received rectification, and the true Divine wisdom of the *Kabbalah* was revealed to the *AriZal* and in his time the destruction ceased and will be no more.”

This testimony is further proof — if further proof is needed — that the Holocaust was not a rectification for previous sin, but another matter which, as discussed above, transcends all intellect (See *Sefer HaSichos* 5751, Vol. I p. 233, footnote 116.)

52. See *Yalkut Shimoni, Tebillim, Remez* 701.

53. See *Responsa of Chasam Sofer, Yoreh De’ab* 333; *Even HaEzer*, vol. 2, 132.

54. *Siddur Tebillat HaShem*, p. 192.

55. See *Sanbedrin* 47a.

promises to avenge their blood since their murder is the opposite of His will.

“So great is the spiritual level of the *Kedoshim* — even disregarding their standing in *mitzvah* performance — that the Rabbis say⁵⁶ about them, ‘No creation can stand in their place.’⁵⁷ How much more so of those who died in the Holocaust, who, as is well known, many were of the finest of Europe’s Torah-observant Jewry.

“It is inconceivable that the Holocaust be cited as an example of punishment for sin, in particular when addressing this generation, which as mentioned before is a firebrand plucked from the fire of the Holocaust. In fact, such words will have no effect whatsoever and there should be fulfilled the continuation of the verse in *Zechariah*: ‘See I have removed your iniquity from upon you and had you clothed in fresh garments.... Let them place a pure turban upon his head.... The angel who spoke with me returned and woke me as a man is awakened from his sleep. He said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see and behold! — There is a *menorah* made entirely of gold...,”’ i.e., the true and essential level of every Jew⁵⁸ is revealed through the illumination of ‘the lamp of the *mitzvah* and the light of the Torah.’”⁵⁹

* * *

On Shabbos *Parshas Shemos* 5751, the Rebbe again criticized those who speak ill of our generation⁶⁰ and added the following point:

56. *Pesachim* 50a.

57. It is mentioned in *Maggid Meisbarim*, *parshas Tetzaveh* that Rabbi Yosef Karo, the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, was going to merit to give up his life in the sanctification of G-d’s Name, but because of some reason he was punished and he did not merit to die *al kiddush HaShem*. See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 21, p. 176. See also *Yonas Elem*, ch. 22: When *tzaddikim* pass away, they all need purification in the river of Dinur (a form of Heavenly purification) except those who die sanctifying G-d’s Name.

58. See at length *Likkutei Torah*, *Behaalos’cha*, p. 29c.

59. *Misblei* 6:23.

60. See similar *sichos* in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 24, p. 308.

“There are those who wish to suggest that such a path of rebuke and citation of punishment, retribution, etc., is authentic as it is the path of the *Mussar* Movement. This is how the *Maggidim* of old used to rebuke their congregations. They further add that all the writings of the Prophets are full of such rebuke.

“The answer:

“In addition to the fact that in most recent generations the way of *Chassidus* has been embraced in most Jewish circles, and it has been demonstrated as the most effective way to draw the hearts of Jews to Our Father in Heaven, in particular the *tinokos shenishbu* of this generation who, when spoken to sharply are turned off, whereas when spoken to warmly show interest — the saying of *mussar* also has to fall within the parameters of Torah as demonstrated by all the *gedolei Yisrael* who walked in that path.

“There are many preconditions to saying *mussar*:

“1. *Abavas Yisrael*:⁶¹

“It is written,⁶² ‘Listen my son to the rebuke of your father,’ ‘and one who loves (his son) will give him *mussar*.’⁶³ Words of *mussar* need to be said like a father says them to a son, i.e. in such a way that even when the father rebukes the son, and on occasion punishes the son, it should be recognizable at that moment the true love that the father has for the son.

“When one Jew rebukes another, a precondition must be *abavas Yisrael*, and the test is if the recipient of the rebuke feels that he is being rebuked out of love.

“2. Humility:

61. The *mitzvah* of “You shall repeatedly rebuke” and the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* are juxtaposed in *Vayikra* 19:17,18. This teaches us that a prerequisite for rebuke must be *abavas Yisrael*. One could further suggest that *abavas Yisrael* may be demonstrated in two ways: 1) With *chessed*, i.e., with love, kindness, acts of charity, etc., and 2) With *gevurah*/rebuke, by guiding a person onto the correct path. Since the source of this type of rebuke is *abavas Yisrael*, it follows that the rebuke will not be out of anger but in a peaceful and pleasant manner (*Hisvaadiyus* 5743, Vol. 4, p. 1927).

62. *Misblei* 1:8.

63. *Ibid.* 13:24. See also *Shemos Rabbah* at beginning of the *parshah*.

“A main precondition to public rebuke is that the one rebuking should not laud himself over the community and direct rebuke down at them, rather he should put himself on the same level as the community,⁶⁴ i.e., that he is personally upset and pained about the situation of the community whom he is rebuking, and it is very noticeable in the rebuke that the words are being delivered with a humble heart, and indeed the orator includes himself in the rebuke with the need to correct himself for the same things in which the community needs correction,⁶⁵ albeit perhaps in a more subtle way. How much more so when he could be accused of “practice what you preach.”⁶⁶ When the community hears words of self-rebuke, it definitely has an effect on them.

“This matter is highlighted by the teaching⁶⁷ that when one sees a defect in another, it is proof that in some way one also possesses the same defect, similar like looking in the mirror: if you have a clean face then you only see a clean face, but if you see some dirt, then there is dirt on one’s own face, in which case the Rabbis tell us, ‘Adorn yourself before you adorn others.’⁶⁸

“From the above it is understood that when words of rebuke do not meet these conditions, i.e., they are said without

64. See comment in *Midrash Rabbah* on the verse in *Kohes* 10:4. *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, pp. 716-719.

65. See *Kesser Shem Tov*, section 131 where the Baal Shem Tov explains the double expression of rebuke used in the verse, “*Hochaiach tochiach*,” — “You shall surely rebuke your friend,” and says that one must rebuke oneself at the same time as when rebuking one’s friend. See also *Sefer Maamarim Kuntreisim*, *ibid.*, where the Previous Rebbe explains the concept that a *gadol bador*, the greatest one in the generation, is held responsible for the sins of the generation. This means that the *gadol bador* has to understand that in a very refined way, he too has a connection with this sin, and if he engages in *teshuvah* and will bewail his own situation, this will have an effect on the generation. This is the reason why, throughout history, we find many great *tzaddikim* who were constantly engaged in *teshuvah*, fasting, and other forms of rectification. See a story of the Mitteler Rebbe in this connection in *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, Vol. 2, p. 712.

66. *Bava Basra* 15b.

67. See *Meor Einayim*, *Chukas*; *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*, *Terumah* (end); *Likkutei Torah Bebaalos'cha*, p. 33a; *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 83; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 10, p. 24.

68. *Bava Metzia* 107b.

mention of self-improvement and with no feeling for the recipient, then they are not *mussar* but empty words and G-d help us from their effect.⁶⁹

“As regards the words of the Prophets:

“1. The words of the Prophets are words of G-d: ‘He revealed His secret to His servants the Prophets,’⁷⁰ ‘The spirit of the L-rd spoke in me and His word was on my tongue.’⁷¹ The Prophets gave over the word of G-d, whereas the words of any mortal are his own — and certainly when they are said in a manner unlike that of a ‘Merciful Father’⁷² and contrary to the ways and teachings of the Torah.

“2. Even regarding those Prophets who did give over the word of G-d, the Sages tell us that ‘G-d does not desire one who speaks badly of Israel,’⁷³ and in fact brings punishment upon them even though they were obligated to say the words.⁷⁴ If this was the case with the Prophets, then how much more so today when there is no more prophecy⁷⁵ — nobody should take upon himself to speak such words⁷⁶ in such a style as to loosen their tongues upon the people and to call them sinners.⁷⁷

“It should be G-d’s will that such negative words about *bnei Yisrael* should cease, and only through increasing in *abavas*

69. See *Kesser Shem Tov*, *ibid.*

70. *Amos* 3:7.

71. *Shmuel* 2:23:2.

72. *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Sboftim Remez* 62 points out that the A-lmighty only designated His name on prophetic words of consolation and not on words of rebuke. The *Midrash* quotes examples from the Torah and from *Yirmeyahu*. See also *Likkutei Torah*, *Derushei Rosh Hashanah*, p. 62d.

73. *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:6; *Zohar Chadash*, *Parshas Noach* p. 23a.

74. See *Megillah* 14b; *Maharsba*, *ibid.*; *Or HaTorah* of the Maggid of Mezeritch, p. 53a, 108b.

75. *Bava Basra* 12b.

76. See *Megillah* 25b, and *sichah* of *Rosh Chodesh Elul* 5742.

77. As regards the style of *maggidim*, see *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 2, p. 218b.

Yisrael will the cause of the exile⁷⁸ — baseless hatred — be rectified, which will bring *Masbiach* speedily in our days.⁷⁹

Seek Only Merit

ON SHABBOS *PARSHAS KI SISA* 5751 THE REBBE ELABORATED FURTHER ON the theme of seeking only merit for this generation:⁸⁰

“Another fundamental lesson that one can learn from this week’s *parshah*:

“Even in such a depressed state as the Jews were in after they had sinned at the Golden Calf (and before they had repented and there was a revelation of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy), Moshe did everything in his power — even suggesting that his name be erased from the Torah — and was in fact successful in achieving forgiveness and pardon for the people through seeking merit for them.⁸¹

“So, too, do we find that great Jewish leaders throughout the generations searched only for merits upon the people. Such a leader was the famed *tzaddik*, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, who was known to be a ‘Lover of Israel’⁸² and was renowned always to search and to seek the merits in his fellow man.⁸³

78. See *Yoma* 9b.

79. See also the *sichah* of Shabbos *Parshas Va'eira*, the 26th of Teves 5751, where the Rebbe again expresses his disapproval of rebuke for this generation, where the content is full of words of warning and retribution, G-d forbid.

80. See also the continuation of this theme in the *sichah* of Shabbos *Parshas Vayikra*, *Sefer HaSichos* 5750, Vol. 1, p. 378, at length.

81. See *Rashi* on *Yisro* 20:2: “Why did G-d say the Ten Commandments in the singular expression? To give Moshe an angle by which he could seek merit upon the people.” This means that Moshe could later claim that since the Ten Commandments were expressed in the singular, they were only commanded to Moshe and not to the entire people.

82. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. 1, p. 436, how the Berditchever translated favorably verses that seemingly were not said as a praise of the people.

83. Through his *avodah* he was worthy to create a new department in Heaven called, “*Heichal HaZehus*,” (“the Chamber of Merit”) (see *Sefer HaSichos* 5700, p. 116). The Previous Rebbe writes in a letter (*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, vol. 5, p. 88): The Alter Rebbe, *Baal HaTanya*, once said to his son the Mittlerer Rebbe: The angel Michael can be embarrassed in his *avodah* of seeking merit for the Jewish people compared to the way the Berditchever Rav, seeks merit for them. In fact, there is

“One may possibly suggest that such a ‘search for merit’ does not only have a great effect in the heavenly spheres, but also upon those whom merit is sought, that the good that was seen would eventually be actually revealed...⁸⁴

“...From this we can learn that together with the great effort to return to the fold those who have been ‘lost,’ one must view them with a favorable eye and to seek merits for them starting from the fact that the reason they are ‘lost’ is not their own fault, rather they are *tinokos shenishboo*, and seeking merits in them will eventually cause them to find their path back to *Yiddishkeit*.”⁸⁵

The Final Word

RABBI SHIMON BAR YOCHAI SAID: “I CAN ABSOLVE THE ENTIRE WORLD FROM judgment.”⁸⁶ From this we learn that the Rashbi was willing to

nothing new in his superiority in this area, for the Rav is a *nesbamab*, whereas Michael is only an angel. A *nesbamab* is greater and more clever than an angel. From the way the Berditchever Rav seeks merit for the people, the A-lmighty built a new department in Heaven called “*Heichal HaZchus*.” Any Jew who seeks merit for another soul, notwithstanding the type of body in which the soul is encloded, and says a chapter of *Tebillim* for him, enters into the *Heichal HaZchus*. Both of them (both the one who says the *Tebillim* and the one for whom the *Tebillim* is being said) are helped in whatever they need.

The Berditchever Rav’s *avodab* in seeking merit for the Jewish people was developed after hearing three of four teachings from the Mezritcher Maggid which the Maggid heard from the Baal Shem Tov on the subject of *abavas Yisrael*. The great *abavas Yisrael* of the Berditchever Rav cannot compare to the great *abavas Yisrael* of the Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov said that one needs to have *mesirus nefesh* for *abavas Yisrael* even for a Jew whom one has never seen.

The greatness of *abavas Yisrael* and its merit is impossible to estimate, and praised be the person who is constantly engaged in this *mitzvah*.

84. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, p. 32; Vol. 35, p. 337, that seeking merit alone is not enough, it must be accompanied by action.

85. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 12, p. 264, that true *abavas Yisrael* arouses great feelings of compassion for those who are not doing *teshuvah*.

86. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 33, p. 76, that the Rashbi stated that with his son Elazar he could absolve the entire world from judgment from the day of creation until his days, and if he would also count Yotam ben Uziyahu with him, he could absolve the world from judgment from the beginning of creation until the end of time. The reason he could do this, although they were only individuals, was that the Rashbi looked at Israel throughout all generations as being one entity, and therefore the action of any individual has a great effect on them all.

give all his personal merits for those who did not have any merits — “the entire world” — meaning even for those whom he never saw in his life, and even for those on the other side of the world. How much more so his relatives and close friends. Let the conduct of the Rashbi be a lesson for us.⁸⁷



87. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 7, p. 343.

Chapter 10

A PREPARATION FOR TORAH AND PRAYER

Abavas Yisrael as a Preparation for the Giving of the Torah

WHEN *BNEI YISRAEL* APPROACHED MT. SINAI, THE VERSE ATTESTS: “AND (he) Israel encamped there.” Grammatically, the verse should have been expressed in the plural, “And *they* encamped there.” From the singular expression the Sages explain that when the people encamped at Sinai they were “as one man with one heart”¹ — with *abavas Yisrael*. A number of reasons are given as to why *abavas Yisrael* is a prerequisite to the giving of the Torah:

1. As mentioned above, *abavas Yisrael* arouses the essence of the soul, and the giving of the Torah was from the Essence of G-d to the essence of the soul.²

2. The entire Torah was given to bring peace to the world.³ It therefore follows that the preparation for such an event is unity and peace.⁴

3. The Torah was given in a desert to indicate that the Torah is of a higher source than the world and above worldly matters. In order to receive the Torah it must be given in a place that is *hefker* — a no-man’s land where all can acquire it. The prerequisite then is that the Jew should rise above his own

1. *Shemos* 19:2. *Rashi* and *Mechilta*, *ibid*.

2. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 301.

3. *Rambam*, end of *Hilchos Chanukah*. See also *Sifri*, *Nasso* 6:26.

4. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 298. See also *Yalkut Shimoni*. *Mishlei*, *Remez* 934. See also at length *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 28, p. 241.

ego and make himself like a desert — which is achieved through *abavas Yisrael* and ways of peace.⁵

4. *Abavas Yisrael* also increases the potency of learning Torah, as the “cleaving to friends” and “discussions among the students”⁶ are the ways in which Torah is acquired.⁷

Abavas Yisrael as a Preparation for Prayer

AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF OUR DAILY SERVICES, MANY *SIDDURIM* QUOTE IN the name of the *AriZal*⁸ that it is correct to make the following statement:

“I accept upon myself the responsibility to fulfill the positive commandment: ‘Love your fellow as yourself.’”⁹

Our Sages tell us that when we pray, we should pray with the community. This acceptance of *abavas Yisrael* causes one to

5. *Sefer HaSichos 5751*, Vol. 2, p. 545.

6. *Pirkei Avos* 6:6.

7. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 25, p. 453.

8. *Pri Etz Chaim Sbaar Olam HaAsiyab*, ch. 1, *shaar* 3; ch. 2 (end); *Siddur of the AriZal*. See *Shaar HaKollel* 3:2 and *Sefer HaMaamarim* of Alter Rebbe, *Parshiyos*, Vol. 2, p. 941.

9. *Siddur of the Alter Rebbe*. See *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, Vol. 1, p. 395, *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, vol. 4, p. 190. In a *sichab* of the Previous Rebbe (*Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 156-157), he relates that on the day of his *bar mitzvab*, his father the Rebbe Rashab was in high spirits. The Rebbe Rashab commented that on the day of the *bar mitzvab* it was customary in the house of the Rebbeim that the *bar mitzvab* boy should ask something. He explained that this was also done at the *bar mitzvabs* of the previous *Rebbeim*. My father said to me, “Yosef Yitzchok, ask something!” I asked my father: “In the *Siddur* it says that one should accept upon oneself the *mitzvab* of *abavas Yisrael* before prayer. Why particularly before prayer? If one has to have *abavas Yisrael* immediately in the morning, this declaration should have been said with the morning blessings?” My father replied: When a father has many children, his main pleasure comes to the fore when he sees that they all get along and love each other. In prayer, a person makes his personal requests from G-d, both material and spiritual. Before this request, one has to create “*nachas*” for G-d. Therefore the declaration was fixed before prayer. This is the type of education a father should give his son on the day of his *bar mitzvab*. *Abavas Yisrael* not only expresses itself in giving the other person food to eat, or lending him money, or giving him a place to sleep for the night. The concept of *abavas Yisrael* encompasses the entire being, i.e. the needs of the other should be seen as a primary concern over and above one’s own needs. This is expressed in a saying of the early chassidim when they said that a person should love himself as much as he loves another!

be included within the community and therefore creates the true act of communal prayer.¹⁰

It is interesting that the Alter Rebbe instituted that the statement “I accept upon myself etc.,” be specifically *said* before prayer rather than accepted in thought¹¹ or feeling.¹²

A possible explanation:¹³ As the Alter Rebbe explains in chapter 32 of *Tanya*, all Jews are united at the soul level, as they are one in their Source. It is only as the souls descend into

10. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5709, p. 99. In a *sichab* on the 19th of Kislev 5724, the Rebbe explains that the Hebrew word “*tzibbur*” (צבור) is spelled *tzaddik*, *beis*, *vov*, *reish*, which stands for *tzaddik*=*tzaddikim*, *beis*=*beinonim* (intermediates), *reish*=*resba'im* (the wicked), and the *vov* connects the *tzaddikim* and *beinonim* with the *resba'im*, meaning that “*refillah betzibbur*” (communal prayer) is when all strands of the community are united. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 8, p. 47; Vol. 21, p. 257.

11. The *Magen Avraham*, *Orach Chaim*, ch. 46, and the *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe, *ibid.*, only state that one should accept upon oneself the *mitzvab*, but do not stress that the acceptance must be verbal. However in the *Siddur*, he explicitly states that the acceptance should be verbalized.

Although the source of making this declaration is in the writings of the *AriZal*, and not everything the *AriZal* writes is applicable to all, however since the Alter Rebbe writes this in the *Siddur*, it applies to everybody.

In fact, in the *Pri Etz Chaim*, which is the source of the *AriZal*'s words quoted in the Alter Rebbe's *Siddur*, the implication is that the *mitzvab* should actually be fulfilled before prayer; however, from the words of the Alter Rebbe it appears that it is enough to make a declaration. However one may suggest that there are in fact two stages: 1) the declaration before prayer and 2) the fulfillment in the saying of *Mah tovu*. On the verse *Mah tovu*, in fact, *Sanhedrin* 105b explains that it refers to the houses of study and houses of prayer. *Rashi* comments on the verse that the entrances of their houses (tents) are not opposite one another. Although these are two different commentaries, they may however be fused. It is well known that, in general, when one person looks at another, the first thing is to try and find fault. Whereas when a person looks at himself, the first thing is to look and find the good. The truth is that the opposite should be the case. The same thing is true of a person in the synagogue. In general, when a person sits in *shul*, he tries to look different from when he is sitting at home. Blending the *Midrash* and *Rashi* one may now explain the following: Do not look at your friend as he is at home — the entrances are not opposite one another — rather look at him as he stands in *shul* and try your best to imagine him at home as you see him in *shul*. Such a feeling when saying *Mah tovu* is the fulfillment of the declaration of *abavas Yisrael*.

12. It may be suggested that the advantage of verbal expression is that another person will hear. However as a preparation to prayer, which is primarily a communication between a person and G-d, it would be preferable that the person first “adorn himself” (*Bava Metziah* 107b) which in this case would mean just a quiet thought to oneself — and yet the Alter Rebbe says that one should say the declaration aloud.

13. *Sefer HaSichos* 5750, Vol. 1, p. 214.

bodies that differences appear. This is especially so in the time of exile when the Jews are scattered among the nations. It is particularly in this situation that the challenge is greatest to reveal their true essence. For this reason, the Alter Rebbe instituted that the acceptance of *abavas Yisrael* — which is a realization of the essence — should be verbalized, for it is necessary that the feelings of *abavas Yisrael* not only remain in the realm of thought but are actually brought into the world of action.¹⁴

There are in fact many connections between *abavas Yisrael* and prayer:¹⁵

1. *Abavas Yisrael* is the gateway through which one enters in order to stand before the A-lmighty in prayer.¹⁶

2. As mentioned above, every soul contains within itself all other souls. Hatred of a fellow Jew causes a division within the soul, which renders a blemish in the soul.¹⁷ Such a blemished soul is not readily accepted Above, for the A-lmighty is the source of all souls. Only a wholesome soul that is at peace with all other souls will be well received.¹⁸

3. One of the main purposes of prayer is to fulfill the imperative of, “And you shall love the L-rd your G-d, etc.” — i.e., *abavas HaShem*. As mentioned above, *abavas Yisrael* is the vessel for *abavas HaShem*.

14. And speech is an action (*Sanbedrin* 65a; *Bava Metzia* 90b).

15. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, Vol. 3, p. 46, regarding the different types of contemplation necessary before prayer — but contemplating on and developing a feeling to do another Jew a favor is the most important. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5691, *Parsbas Bereishis*.

16. *HaYom Yom*, p. 67.

17. As in the case of an animal sacrifice, an animal with a blemish is invalid (*Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 28b). Further parallels may be drawn with animal sacrifice: Before the sacrifice, both hands were placed on the animal (*semichab*) which allowed the elevation of the sacrifice. So, too, acceptance of *abavas Yisrael* before prayer is the preparation symbolically for sacrificing the “animal soul” within man (see *Tanya*, ch. 1). See *VeHecherim* 5631, p. 22.

18. *Derech Mitzvosecha*, *ibid*. See also *Siddur of the Alter Rebbe*, p. 22b. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 8, p. 47.

4. The purpose of prayer is to elevate all echelons of existence, even the most basic levels. It is therefore correct to include oneself before the act of prayer with all Israel, even those who are not on one's level, even if they are to be found in a far-flung corner of the world and that one has never seen.¹⁹

5. Acceptance of the *mitzvah* of *abavas Yisrael* also aids in the downward flow and receipt of the Divine influence which is revealed in the act of prayer. Doing a favor for another causes: 1), that all supernal gates and chambers are opened for him²⁰ (the downward flow); and 2), that his mind and heart become more receptive to receive the revelation.²¹

6. Most of all, the spirit and feeling of *abavas Yisrael* causes a great *nachas ruach* (a great pleasure) Above, and because of that *nachas ruach*, G-d fulfills the requests made in the prayers.²²

7. The *Mishnah*²³ states that the request for rain in the prayers was not made until fifteen days after the Succos festival in order "that the last of Israel should reach the river Euphrates," (i.e., those pilgrims who came from Babylon would have time to return home before the rainy season). This contains a powerful lesson in *abavas Yisrael*. Even though the Land of Israel desperately needs rain, the request for rain is delayed so that not even the "last Jew" should be harmed by it.²⁴

19. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 201.

20. See *HaYom Yom*, p. 66; *Sefer HaMaamarim 5711*, p. 153.

21. There is a well-known story of the Tzemach Tzedek that he would often see, either in the form of a dream or while awake, his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, after the Alter Rebbe had passed away. On one occasion, he had many questions that he very much wished to ask the Alter Rebbe for direction on certain matters, but the Alter Rebbe failed to appear to him. One morning, before the morning prayers, he went to give a *gemach* (free-interest loan) to a simple Jew. After he had fulfilled that *mitzvah*, entered the synagogue, and put on *tallis* and *tefillin*, the Alter Rebbe appeared to him with a beaming face. See ch. 11 of this book.

See also *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 98; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 403.

22. *HaYom Yom*, p. 67; *Sefer HaSichos 5700*, Vol. 1, p. 157. See also *Siddur of the Alter Rebbe*, pp. 22b, c.

23. *Taanis* 10a. See also *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim*, ch. 117.

24. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p. 378.

A Preparation for Building the *Mishkan* — Tabernacle

AHAVAS YISRAEL WAS AN IMPORTANT PREREQUISITE FOR THE BUILDING OF the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The verse²⁵ tells us: “And Moshe gathered the entire congregation of Israel,” to instruct them to donate materials for the construction. This contribution from the entire congregation constituted the creation of an edifice which united all Israel.²⁶

The construction itself was carried out by Betzalel from the tribe of Yehudah, and Oholiov from the tribe of Dan. These two chief architects represented the greatest and the least significant of the tribes respectively to demonstrate true unity.²⁷

The necessity for this unity was:

1. The whole purpose of “And you shall make for Me a Sanctuary” is so that “I may dwell in their midst.”²⁸ The resting of the Divine Presence — the revelation of the Essence which reveals true Unity — is effected by “And Moshe²⁹ gathered the entire congregation,” i.e., *abavas Yisrael* and *achdus Yisrael* — Jewish unity — on all levels, both physical and spiritual.³⁰

2. The purpose of the building of the *Mishkan* was to elevate base material items and transform them into vehicles for G-dliness. For this reason the *Mishkan* was made of physical substances, such as silver and gold. The objective, then, was similar to the act of prayer, i.e., to elevate even the lowliest forms of existence.³¹ Accordingly, it was necessary for the most lowly of the tribes to participate in the construction of the *Mishkan*. This is analogous to prayer, before which a person must identify himself with the lowliest members of the Jewish

25. *Shemos* 35:1.

26. See *sichab* of *Vayakbel Pikudei* 5724, section 2.

27. See *Shemos Rabbah* 40:4; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 201.

28. *Shemos* 25:8.

29. *Abavas Yisrael* comes about through self-nullification and this is the attribute of Moshe (see *Tanya*, ch. 42).

30. *Sichab* of *Vayakbel Pikudei*, *ibid.*

31. See *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Berachos* 4:3.

people. He does so with the goal of elevating them, afterwards, through his prayer.³²



32. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 202.

FOR A DRUNK, EVERY LAST DROP OF LIQUOR IS PRECIOUS.
I AM DRUNK WITH THE SPREADING OF TORAH AND *AHAVAS YISRAEL*,
AND EVERY DROP IS VERY PRECIOUS.

(The Previous Rebbe)

THE COMMUNAL GOOD OF *KLAL YISRAEL* MUST TAKE
PRECEDENCE OVER PERSONAL AMBITIONS AND INTERESTS.

(*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 22, p. 258)

IT IS MY DEEPEST AND MOST PERSONAL REQUEST THAT WE SHOULD
WORK TO UNITE THE JEWISH PEOPLE BASED ON THE *MITZVAH* OF
“LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF.” THIS *MITZVAH* MUST BE KEPT
IN FULL AND WHOEVER INCREASES IN IT IS WORTHY OF PRAISE.

(*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 22, p. 323)

“*KOL YISRAEL AREVEIN ZEH LOZEH*” (*SHAVUOS* 39A). THE PREVIOUS REBBE
EXPLAINED THAT THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO TRANSLATE THE WORD
AREV: SWEET, MIXED, AND GUARANTOR. EVERY JEW IS SWEET, ALL JEWS
TOGETHER ARE MIXED/INTERMINGLED AND GUARANTORS FOR ONE
ANOTHER.

(*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 12, p. 264)

ONE SHOULD LOVE THE SIMPLE JEW JUST LIKE THE GREATEST TORAH
SCHOLAR, BECAUSE HE IS A JEW AND WE ALL HAVE ONE FATHER.

“YOU ARE G-D’S CHILDREN AND I LOVE YOU,” SAYS G-D.

(*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 9, p. 329)

CHASSIDIM USED TO SAY: THE ANGELS IN GENERAL, AND THE ANGEL
MICHOEL WITH HIS 186,000 CAMPS OF ACCOMPANYING ANGELS IN
PARTICULAR, FASHION OUT OF EVERY SON AND DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL A
BRIGHT AND SHINING CHANDELIER.

(*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5709, p. 206)

IF ALL *MITZVOS* MUST BE DONE IN A BEAUTIFUL MANNER (*HIDDUR*
MITZVAH), HOW MUCH MORE SO SHOULD THE *MITZVAH* OF *AHAVAS YISRAEL*
— A GREAT PRINCIPLE OF THE TORAH — BE DONE IN A BEAUTIFUL
MANNER.

(*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 321)

THE ALTER REBBE ONCE SAID: THE *ARIZAL* MERITED THE REVELATION OF
ELIJAHU AND *RUACH HAKODESH* BECAUSE OF HIS JOY IN DOING A *MITZVAH*.
THE BAAL SHEM TOV MERITED THE REVELATION OF ELIJAHU AND *RUACH*
HAKODESH BECAUSE OF HIS JOY IN DOING *AHAVAS YISRAEL*.

(*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 8, p. 110)

AHAVAS YISRAEL IS PRECIOUS TO G-D,
FOR TO G-D, EVERY JEW IS A *SEFER TORAH*.

(*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 9, p. 366)

DOING A FAVOR FOR ANOTHER IN THE MATERIAL WORLD
IS GREATER THAN UNDERSTANDING A DEEP CONCEPT IN LEARNING.
HOW MUCH MORE SO A SPIRITUAL FAVOR.

(*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711, p. 152)

Chapter 11

SEVEN STORIES

IN THE FIRST CHASSIDIC DISCOURSE¹ THAT THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE delivered on the 10th/11th of Shevat 5711 (1951) upon accepting the mantle of leadership of the Lubavitch movement, he recounted several stories of how each of the *Rebbeim* of Chabad displayed *ahavas Yisrael*.

The Alter Rebbe

ONCE, ON YOM KIPPUR MORNING, THE ALTER REBBE TOOK OFF HIS *TALLIS* and *kittel* and went to the edge of the city. Once there, he cut some wood to make a fire in order to cook soup for a woman who had just given birth and had no one to help her.

In a *sichab*² the Rebbe added:

“When the Alter Rebbe was asked why he did it himself and did not send an emissary, he replied that in a case of *pikuach nefesh* — a life-saving situation — the *mitzvah* is that the greatest Jew should do it.³

“There were times when the Previous Rebbe told this story and there were times when he did not want to make reference to it. Even so, if the Previous Rebbe told me, he knew that I would not keep it a secret and I would share it with others.

“The lesson we can learn from this story:

1. See *Sefer HaMaamarim, Basi LeGani*, p. 33 (*Basi LeGani* — Chassidic Discourses, p. 96ff.).

2. *Toras Menachem 5710*, vol. 1, p. 44 (Proceeding Together, Vol. I, pp. 72, 73), *sichab* of the 2nd of Iyar. See also *sichab* of the 19th of Kislev 5723, section 2. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 4, p. 1255 where the Rebbe also relates the story of how the Alter Rebbe was willing to meet with the famous Jew hater Derzhavin in order to help out one Jewess in a financial matter, even though the Alter Rebbe was disgraced at the meeting.

3. See *Yoma* 84b, *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim* 328:13.

“The level that the Alter Rebbe was on on Yom Kippur — comparable to an angel in his *tallis* and *kittel* — how can anyone describe it? Even so, the Alter Rebbe took off his *tallis* and *kittel* and went to the edge of the city close to the fields, which in its spiritual context means the descent to the field of Esav,⁴ just to help bring another Jew into the world. This story impresses upon us the necessity to do all we can to work with another and to draw him near to the Torah of *Chassidus*.⁵ This story also illustrates the necessity for action. Some claim they are already too busy engaged in all sorts of beneficial things to extend actual help where help is needed. Go learn from the Alter Rebbe: he was certainly engaged in prayer at the highest level and yet he interrupted his *avodah* in order to help a simple Jew!”⁶

The Mittler Rebbe

A YOUNG MAN ONCE ENTERED INTO THE OFFICE OF THE MITTELER REBBE and bemoaned a certain matter that was troubling him. The Mittler Rebbe rolled up his sleeve, bared his arm, and said, “You see how my arm has shriveled? This is due to your sins.” The greatness of the Mittler Rebbe and his distance from such matters (of sin) is well known, yet he was so bound up with his chassidim that if something was wrong with them, it had a physical effect on the Rebbe.

The Tzemach Tzedek⁷

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK ONCE RELATED TO HIS SON THE REBBE MAHARASH A story that happened to him:

4. See *Toldos* 25:27.

5. In some versions of the *sichab*: In truth, we should go out into the streets and shout, “*Gevalt Yidden*, there is a Torah of Chassidus; G-d wants us to learn Chassidus so that *Mashiach* should come!”

6. *Hisvaadiyus* 5744, Vol. 2, p. 627.

7. The story is related in brief in the *maamar*, and the following is the story in full as printed in *Toras Menachem* 5710, Vol. 1, p. 211 (Proceeding Together, Vol. II, p. 190ff.

When I was traveling from Dobromisl to Lubavitch, I was very satisfied with the inner *kiruv* that my grandfather — the Alter Rebbe — had showed me, and I very much hoped that upon my return to Lubavitch I would have the merit to see my grandfather with a shining face (i.e., in a vision, for this story took place many years after the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe). Meanwhile I had many questions that I wished to ask the Alter Rebbe in *Chassidus* and *Nigleh* (the revealed parts of the Torah) and I arranged all the questions in my mind.

As soon as I arrived in Lubavitch, I went to the very spot that the Alter Rebbe had told us about when he had come to Lubavitch from Liadi many years before. He had described how he had learned in the *shul* that had stood there, but now, as a fire had since destroyed the *shul*, the place was empty. The Mittlerer Rebbe once said regarding that place, that 57 years previously, the Alter Rebbe had made Lubavitch a place befitting for the leadership of Chabad and bestowed upon it its eternal quality until the coming of *Mashiach*.

The fact was that when I returned to Lubavitch, I did not see the Alter Rebbe and I felt very dejected and broken. I felt as if I had fallen from a high place into a deep pit as my awaited inner *kiruv* did not come. It pained me greatly and I searched my deeds to find the cause so that I could do *teshuvah* and again merit to see the holy countenance of my grandfather and to hear Torah from him.

On Wednesday, the 20th of Elul, the Tzemach Tzedek went to *shul* to pray. On his way there, he met one of the townspeople, Reb Pinchas, who requested from the Rebbe an interest-free loan (*gemilus chessed*) of three ruble in order to do some business in the market to earn enough money for *Shabbos*. The Tzemach Tzedek replied that Reb Pinchas should come to his house after prayers and then the Rebbe would loan him the money.

However when the Rebbe was preparing for prayer with his *tallis* on his shoulder, he remembered that Reb Pinchas had said that today was a market day and that the market opens early in

the morning. When he realized that Reb Pinchas would need the money immediately, the Tzemach Tzedek took off his *tallis*, went home, took five ruble and gave it to Reb Pinchas so that he could earn some money.

Upon returning to *shul* the Tzemach Tzedek washed his hands, whereupon the Alter Rebbe appeared to him in a vision and answered all his questions in learning.

From this story we see how great is the effect of giving *tzedakah* on the spiritual worlds. The Tzemach Tzedek, despite all the great *kiruvim* he received from the Alter Rebbe, and despite all his holy efforts, could not see the Alter Rebbe. It was only when he met a Jew in the street — not in his immediate environs, and not when he was saying *Tebillim* or the like, and then delaying his prayers to do a material favor for another — did he merit to see the Alter Rebbe.

The Rebbe Maharash⁸

ONCE, THE REBBE MAHARASH TRAVELED TO PARIS ACCOMPANIED BY THE *gabbaim* R. Levik and R. Pinchas Leib, and the chassidim R. M. Monezson and Reb Y. Berlin. When they arrived in Paris, R. Y. Berlin asked his uncle the Rebbe Maharash where they should go, and the Rebbe directed him to the Hotel Alexander, one of the fanciest hotels in Paris, frequented by royalty. He further added that since Reb Y. Berlin didn't speak French, the Rebbe would do the talking.

When they arrived at the hotel, the Rebbe requested a number of rooms and was informed that there were rooms available at 200 francs a day. The Rebbe asked if there were any better rooms and also if they were on the same floor as the game rooms. They replied that such rooms were available but for a huge price, and undeterred, the Rebbe hired three rooms: one for himself, one for R. Levik and one for R. Pinchas Leib.

8. This story was also related in brief in the *maamar*. The full story can be found in *Sefer HaSichos 5705*, pp.30-1; *Sefer HaToldos Maharash*, p.77; *Otzer Sippurei Chabad*, Vol. 8, p. 44.

R. Y. Berlin and R. Monezson stayed in a different hotel due to the astronomical cost of the rooms.

After a few hours in the hotel, the Rebbe went into the game room where the guests were playing a dice game. The Rebbe sat down next to a young man who was playing and who, from time to time, was sipping wine from his glass. The Rebbe placed his hand on the shoulder of this fellow and said, “Young man, *yayin nesech* (non-Kosher wine) is prohibited to drink.” He then repeated, “*Yayin nesech* defiles the mind and heart — be a Jew. Good night.” The Rebbe then returned to his room very excited. R. Y. Berlin said that he never saw his uncle the Rebbe so energized before in his life.

In this hotel, if you wanted to go from one floor to another — in those days there were no elevators — there were special chairs in which you sat and were carried from one floor to another. Out of his great excitement, the Rebbe sat in one of those chairs, and when they lifted him and began carrying him up the stairs, he remembered that he had a room on that floor, and he pardoned himself and returned to his room.

After a few hours, the young man from the game room came and inquired as to the whereabouts of the Rebbe, and he entered the Rebbe’s room and remained there a long time. The next day, the Rebbe left Paris.

The Rebbe later explained that it had been many generations that such a lofty and pure soul had been held captive by the *kelipos* (evil).

The young man became a *baal teshuvah* and the head of family K. in France — an Orthodox and G-d fearing family.

The Rebbe, in the *maamar Basi LeGani*, pointed out that time was very precious to the Rebbe Maharash, even to the extent that his delivery of *Chassidus* was brief. At certain times it was well known that he would have already prayed by eight in the morning, and even so, he traveled such a long way just for one soul!

The Rebbe Rashab

IN THE FIRST YEARS OF THE REBBE RASHAB'S LEADERSHIP, A DECREE WAS made against the Jewish people and the Rebbe had to travel to Moscow to see what he could do about it. His older brother, Reb Zalman Aharon, protested that time was too precious for the Rebbe and anyway he could not speak Russian (while Reb Zalman Aharon could speak many languages). In addition, he had to make new contacts and take care of some other matters, so he suggested that he should go in the Rebbe's place and act on his directives. The Rebbe Rashab refused and insisted that he go himself, and in fact succeeded in his mission.

The Previous Rebbe

IN THE *MAAMAR BASI LEGANI*, THE REBBE DOESN'T TELL ANY PARTICULAR story but refers to the fact that there are numerous stories of the great *ahavas Yisrael* of the Previous Rebbe; of how he would go to great lengths to do a favor, either spiritual or material, for an individual. He put aside not only his material needs in these matters but even his own spirituality, even though the person he was helping was not always in the category of a "friend" in Torah and *mitzvos*, and even if he wasn't on that level at all. We will share a story about the Previous Rebbe printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5701, p. 163:

In the days of Czarist Russia, the head of State for many years was a man called Stulipin, a renowned anti-Semite who made many decrees against the Jews. Once, the Rebbe Rashab heard about one of the decrees that Stulipin was about to make and he instructed his son, Reb Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn (the Previous Rebbe), to try to nullify the decree. The Rebbe traveled immediately to Petersburg, the capital, to discuss the matter with other communal workers. When all other avenues failed, the Rebbe decided to visit the minister Pobiedonostzev who was highly regarded by Stulipin. Although the minister was also anti-Semitic, he was deeply religious and therefore respected ministers of other religions.

After great efforts, the minister agreed to meet the Rebbe; however, the meeting was fixed for a Friday night, and the minister lived a fair distance from the city. The Rebbe decided that the best course of action would be to travel to the minister's town and spend Shabbos there.

In those days, the environs of Petersburg were out of bounds for Jewish dwelling, and although in Petersburg itself there lived a number of Jewish merchants, doctors, etc., outside the city there lived no Jews. Since there were no Jewish families with whom to stay for Shabbos, and it was impossible to stay in the street because of the freezing conditions, the Rebbe was forced to stay at an inn for Shabbos. He waited at the inn until the meeting, and after the meeting he remained at the inn for the duration of Shabbos.

One could easily imagine how the Rebbe felt staying at the inn among drunken peasants who were virulently anti-Semitic; how much more so since it was doubtful if his mission would be successful. If he had made a "calculation," he could have reasoned that he was not necessarily obligated to go and spend Shabbos among drunken peasants and put his life in danger on a doubtful mission. However, since the matter affected the Rebbe so deeply, he made no calculations and risked his life in order to save his people.

The Rebbe related this same story on another occasion and added that when the Previous Rebbe told the story he said that since the weather was very cold, he put on a fur coat, something that was unusual. The Rebbe asked, why was it necessary for the Previous Rebbe to add what kind of coat he wore? He explained that this teaches us that even if one has to go to a place that is spiritually freezing in order to save another Jew, one must nevertheless take great precaution that one should not be affected by the environment but should wear a spiritual "fur coat" for protection.

Two Stories of the Rebbe

THIS CHAPTER WOULD BE INCOMPLETE WITHOUT RELATING A STORY ABOUT the great *ahavas Yisrael* of the Rebbe. The difficulty in doing so is that the Rebbe is most probably the greatest *ohav Yisrael* that ever lived, and there are thousands of stories that illustrate this. On a macro scale, one can only stand in awe and amazement of the Rebbe's great ability to set up thousands of worldwide institutions, with intimate knowledge of them all. To the Rebbe, every detail about every organization and every Jew was important.

We will therefore limit ourselves to the micro scale and relate two stories told by a member of the Rebbe's secretariat, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner.

Music at the Wedding

IT IS CUSTOMARY AT WEDDINGS IN CROWN HEIGHTS TO STAGE THE *CHUPAH* just outside the Rebbe's room at Lubavitch Headquarters, 770 Eastern Parkway. After the marriage ceremony, the *chosson* breaks the glass and all present shout *mazal tov*. The musicians then strike up a lively tune.

On one occasion, during the winter, I was standing in the Rebbe's room and a *chupah* was taking place outside. We heard the *chosson* break the glass, followed by shouts of *mazal tov* and singing, but no band was heard. When the Rebbe asked me why there was no music, I answered that the family getting married is poor and they don't have enough money for a band. The Rebbe then instructed me to go outside immediately and tell them that the Rebbe would pay for the music!

Money for Pesach

ONCE, ON *EREV PESACH*, I WAS SITTING IN THE OFFICE WHEN A VERY respectable woman who lived in Crown Heights (who is now in the World of Truth) phoned me and said, "Reb Leib, I don't know what to do. I do not smell any food cooking in my neighbor's kitchen. I thought about what I could do to help,

and finally went across to the neighbor on a pretense and asked her if I could borrow an onion. I knocked on the door and when I entered I saw that the oven was empty — the woman didn't have any food for Pesach. I offered her money but she refused. What should I do?" I answered that I would have to think what to do. I went into the Rebbe's office and related to the Rebbe what this woman had told me. The Rebbe opened his drawer, took out \$500 and gave it to me. I told the Rebbe that the family had already been offered money but had refused. The Rebbe then instructed me to put the money in a plain envelope, slip it under their door, and run away. Afterwards, the same woman called again to say that now she smells the aroma of *Yom Tov* food coming from that kitchen. That is *ahavas Yisrael*.

A Story About the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka

RABBI CHESSED HALBERSTAM RECOUNTED THE FOLLOWING STORY OF AN act of *ahavas Yisrael* of the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka.

The Rebbe instructed Chessed to take the Rebbetzin to the park, and she used to take bread and feed the birds. The park was in Long Island and they would travel along the Long Island Expressway to get there.

Once the highway was blocked off and they made a detour through the local streets. The route was congested and the traffic moved very slowly. As they were driving, they noticed a group of people gathered outside a house and a number of people crying. After passing the house, the Rebbetzin told Chessed that her father, the Previous Rebbe, told her that everything one sees is by Divine Providence and she asked him to return to the spot where the people had gathered.

They returned, and after a brief inquiry found out that a poor Russian family was being evicted from their home because they were in arrears for the rent.

The Rebbetzin asked how much they were in arrears, and the bailiff answered approximately \$8000. The Rebbetzin asked the bailiffs that if she would write a check for \$8000, would they

allow the family to continue living in the apartment, and they answered in the affirmative. The bailiff asked how he would know if the bank would honor the check and the Rebbetzin told him to call the bank. He called and the bank gave the approval. The Rebbetzin wrote out a check, gave it to the bailiff, and asked him if the same men who took the furniture out of the house could bring it back in. She then quickly took leave of the scene before the family would recognize who their benefactress was. She also instructed Chessed not to tell anyone about what had transpired. Only after the passing of the Rebbetzin was the story revealed.⁹

* * *

On numerous other occasions the Rebbe told stories connected with *abavas Yisrael*. The following is one of them.

A Story From the Baal Shem Tov

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK HEARD FROM HIS GRANDFATHER THE ALTER REBBE a story that the Alter Rebbe heard in Mezeritch about the Baal Shem Tov:

Before the Baal Shem Tov revealed himself, and then in the first years of his leadership, the Baal Shem Tov used to travel around the Jewish towns, where, in the middle of the marketplace, he would gather people around him — the simple Jews, men women and children — and tell them stories. The stories were primarily from the *Aggadic* sayings of our Sages, and he would tell them the stories at length and explain them in detail, or he would connect a story with a saying of the Sages so that each idea would be absorbed properly by those hearing it.

Once, at such a gathering, the Baal Shem Tov spoke about the idea of *abavas Yisrael*, explaining how great the love of G-d is for each Jew, and he gave the following example:

In that town, there was a Jew called Reb Yaakov, and he knew the entire Talmud by heart including the commentaries

9. *Kfar Chabad Magazine*.

of *Rashi* and *Tosafos*. He also used to learn verbatim without having to refer to the text. In those days it was not uncommon to find such people.

Learning this way demanded deep concentration, more so than if one was reading from a text. Once, in the middle of learning a large and difficult *Tosafos*, Reb Yaakov was approached by one of his small children who told him something wise. Reb Yaakov was so excited by what the child said that he interrupted his learning. This is what can be achieved by a small child.

“So too,” said the Baal Shem Tov, “G-d is busy, as the Sages tell us that for the first three hours of the day He is learning Torah, etc. However, when a Jew prays and his request comes before the A-lmighty, He interrupts whatever He is doing and He busies Himself with the request of the Jew.”

When G-d wanted to create man, the angels asked Him what man would look like. When G-d told them they claimed, “What is man that he should be mentioned?” i.e., what do You need such a person for?

When a Jew gets up in the morning, and he runs to pray communally with the early *minyan* (*vassikin*), and then is busy the whole day but manages to tear himself away and go to *shul* for *Minchab*, and between *Minchab* and *Maariv* he listens to a *shiur* on the *Ein Yaakov*, and after *Maariv* he comes home and relates to his family what he learned in *Ein Yaakov* in *shul*...

When this happens, the A-lmighty calls together the angels, along with the man whom He has created, and says to them: “You angels have no millstone on your neck (no living to make), no wife and children, no problems, no taxes to pay. This man has a living to make, and it is I who placed the millstone on his neck, for according to the Torah he is obligated to sustain his family, and he is busy paying taxes and in general dealing with the pressures of the exile, and yet see how he conducts himself.

Thinking deeply about how G-d is so proud of every good deed a Jew does will itself have a great effect.¹⁰

* * *

How Can We Possibly Emulate the *Tzaddikim*?

ALL THE STORIES TOLD OF THE GREAT *TZADDIKIM* ARE ALL WONDERFUL AND fine examples, yet how is it possible that such lofty levels be demanded even from simple Jews?

The answer: Jews are believers. We believe in G-d and we believe in G-d's emissaries such as Moshe *Rabbeinu*, and the Moshe *Rabbeinu* in every generation, and in our generation the Rebbe. Faith and belief is not time related, and simple faith crosses all barriers of time, linking all Jews in all generations, including all the great *tzaddikim* of all generations. It is that *emunah* (faith) that gives even small children — in age and in knowledge — the ability to emulate and connect with the great *tzaddikim* of each generation. With effort, following the advice of the Sages, “I worked and I found — believe him,” one will succeed.¹¹



10. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 24, p. 533.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

Chapter 12

AHAVAS YISRAEL AND MASHLACH

Geulah

AHAVAS YISRAEL WILL BRING THE FUTURE REDEMPTION.¹ THE REASON FOR the exile is baseless hatred,² and *ahavas Yisrael* — love for no reason — love even for those in whom one sees no reason to

1. See *Tanchuma, Nitzavim*, section 1: “Israel will not be redeemed until they will all form one group.” In *Or HaTorah, Chanukah*, p. 312b, the Tzemach Tzedek explains the connection between *ahavas Yisrael* and the Redemption, and that which is quoted in *Shabbos* 139a, *Rambam, Hilchos Matnos Ani'im* 10:1, that the Redemption will come in the merit of giving charity.

2. *Yoma* 9b. See footnote in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 32, p. 153 in reference to baseless hatred in the times of the First Temple.

The inner challenge of the exile is not only to generate love for no reason (which annuls the cause of the exile — baseless hatred), but rather to reveal the great love and unity there is amongst the Jewish people even when they are in a state of being scattered among the nations (see *Sefer HaSichos 5749*, Vol. 1, p. 138).

See *Sefer Bonei Yerushalayim*, p. 48 who gives a brilliant insight into the meaning of “baseless hatred.” His explanation is based on *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 25 (p. 276) where the Alter Rebbe explains the saying of our Sages, “whoever is in a rage is as if he worships idols,” (*Nedarim* 22b). In the words of *Tanya*; “The reason is clear to those that have understanding, because at the time of his anger faith has departed from him. For were he to believe that what happened to him is of the L-rd’s doing, he would not become angry at all. And though it is a person possessed of free choice cursing him, or hitting him, or causing damage to his money, and therefore guilty according to the laws of man and the laws of Heaven for having chosen evil, nevertheless, as regards the person harmed — this was already decreed from Heaven and “The Omnipresent has many deputies,” (*Rashi, Shemos* 16:32).

Based on this, the *Bonei Yerushalayim* explains that any hatred, even if it does have a cause, is really baseless, for a person should view what comes to him as a Heavenly decree — either to elevate him or cleanse him of sin. The bearer of evil is merely an emissary. Baseless hatred is therefore a lack of faith tantamount to idolatry.

Bonei Yerushalayim concludes that we would do well to oft repeat Rabbi Akiva’s words, “Everything the A-lmighty does is for the good.”

love, and even for those who possess no *mitzvos*,³ will bring *Masbiach*.⁴

“Love for no reason” means loving another even if one does not “owe” him anything, and even in a case where the *halachic* parameters of the *mitzvah* “love your fellow as yourself” do not obligate love. True love for no reason exists when even the animal soul agrees that this is love for no reason.⁵

Although the *Rambam* writes that one should always take the moderate path, in this matter one must take “love for no reason” to an extreme. Even after one has made great efforts to find merit in another and has failed, one should still have *abavas Yisrael* beyond any calculations. This is true love for no reason.⁶

All of Israel⁷ have an equal obligation to make the utmost effort to remove any baseless hatred from our midst, G-d forbid, and to replace it with love for no reason.

It is written in the book of *Rus* that “Yishai gave birth to David.” The Rebbe explains that “Yishai” is a composite of three letters: *Yud, Shin, Yud*. This can also stand for the words *yachad shivtei Yisrael*, meaning “together all the tribes of Israel.” The verse can therefore be interpreted to mean that when all the Tribes of Israel are together with *abavas Yisrael*, this gives birth to David, King *Masbiach*.⁸

3. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 598; See also Vol. 34, p. 229.

4. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 499, 598. This is also the connection between Eliyahu the Prophet and his being the harbinger of the Redemption (as it states in *Malachi* 3:22): for Eliyahu was a student of Achiyah HaShiloni, who was the spiritual mentor and the teacher of the Baal Shem Tov — whose conduct was with immense *abavas Yisrael*. *Likkutei Sichos, ibid.*, pp. 609-610.

See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 34, p. 23: Love for no reason causes *klal Yisrael* to be beloved to G-d, and “love covers over all iniquity.” See also *Or HaTorah, Shoftim*, p. 840, and *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 13, p. 291.

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 183.

6. *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, p. 326.

7. Even those of the tribe of Levi, whom as the *Rambam* in *Hilchos Shemitah and Yovel* 13:13 states are those who are totally dedicated to serving G-d, are obligated to wage war against Midian whose spiritual counterpart is division and strife. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 213.

8. *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, p. 91, footnote 92.

Mashiach

EVERY JEW POSSESSES A SPARK OF THE SOUL OF *MASHIACH*,⁹ AS IS HINTED IN the verse:¹⁰ “A star shall shoot forth from Yaakov” which is a reference both to *Mashiach*¹¹ and to every Jew.¹² This spark is the level of *yechidah*¹³ of the soul of the Jew which is also the spark of the general *yechidah*, the soul of *Mashiach*.¹⁴ This level of the soul stands above all divisions and transcends all levels. By revealing the *yechidah* level of every Jew, one hastens the revelation of the general *yechidah*, i.e., the revelation of *Mashiach*. *Abavas Yisrael* reveals the *yechidah*.

In this light it must be emphasized that the connection between *abavas Yisrael* and the *Geulah* is not only that *abavas Yisrael* removes the cause of the exile (the opposite of *abavas Yisrael*), but rather, since we are now at the stage in which we have completed our *avodah* that needed to be done throughout the duration of the exile: we have already traveled the forty two journeys through the “desert of the nations”¹⁵ and we are already standing by the “River Jordan” — the level of *Mashiach* of “*Morach Vadain*,”¹⁶ on the brink of Redemption, then most definitely the cause of the exile has *already*¹⁷ been rectified and therefore the emphasis on *abavas Yisrael* is as a taste and even the beginning of the true and complete Redemption which is connected with the unity of Jews as it stands above all division, as underlined in Jewish unity at the level of *yechidah* — the spark of *Mashiach*.

9. *Meor Einayim, Parsbas Pinchas* (end). See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, pp. 599, 692.

10. *Balak* 24:17.

11. *Talmud Yerushalmi, Taanis* 4:5.

12. *Ibid.*, *Maaser Sheni* 4:6.

13. The highest level of the soul, the *pintele Yid*.

14. *Remaz* on *Zohar*, Vol. 2, 40b; Vol. 3, 260b.

15. See *Likkutei Torah, Parsbas Mattos*, p. 88c.

16. See *Sanhedrin* 93b; *Likkutei Torah, Parsbas Mattos*, p. 89b.

17. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5751, p. 718.

The New Torah of *Mashiach*

JUST AS UNITY AND *AHAVAS YISRAEL* WAS A PREPARATION FOR THE GIVING OF the Torah, so is *ahavas Yisrael* the preparation for the “new Torah” which will issue from *Mashiach*.¹⁸ When saying, “I accept upon myself the *mitzvah* of ‘Love your fellow as yourself’” every morning, one should have in mind the saying of the *Rambam* that, “I anxiously await *Mashiach*’s arrival every day” and that through *ahavas Yisrael* one will merit the Torah of *Mashiach*.¹⁹

In this light, the saying of Hillel, “Love the creations and draw them near to the Torah” takes on a new meaning: draw them near to learn the new Torah of *Mashiach* — the esoteric dimension.²⁰

The *mitzvah* of *ahavas Yisrael* will apply in full even after *Mashiach* comes. In that era, the obligation will be to bring every Jew to perfection in living a Torah life.²¹

Pinchas, Eliyahu, and *Ahavas Yisrael*

PINCHAS WAS KNOWN FOR HIS ZEALOUSNESS IN THE KILLING OF ZIMRI. THE Sages teach²² that Pinchas and Eliyahu possessed the same soul. Eliyahu was also famed for his being jealous for G-d, as it says: “I was exceedingly jealous for the L-rd G-d of Hosts.”²³ It was for this reason that G-d gave Pinchas “My covenant, peace,” i.e., that Eliyahu/Pinchas should be present at every *bris milah* (circumcision) to prove to him that Jews are not as bad as he thought. The outcome is that his jealousy for G-d was transformed into *ahavas Yisrael*: he looks only at the merit of the Jews and therefore he merits to be the harbinger of the Redemption.

18. See *On the Essence of Chassidus*.

19. *Sefer HaSichos 5751*, Vol. 2, pp.590-2, and footnote 103, *ibid*.

20. *Sefer HaSichos 5751*, Vol. II, p. 718.

21. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 487.

22. *Targum Yonasan Shemos* 6:18; *Ralbag, I Melachim* 17:1.

23. *I Melachim*, 19:10.

Eliyahu was a student of Achiyah HaShiloni who was the spiritual mentor of the Baal Shem Tov.²⁴ The Baal Shem Tov and all the Rebbeim after him also conducted themselves with great *ahavas Yisrael* and through their *ahavas Yisrael* will we merit Eliyahu to announce the Redemption.

It is imperative to have *ahavas Yisrael* for all types of Jews, even for the most simple of Jews, which, apart from the fact that simple Jews are held with great affection by G-d — like a child by his father — they also have the essential advantage of simplicity. Jealousy for G-d has a place: to be used on oneself, but not on another.²⁵



24. See *Sefer HaMaamarim 5709*, p. 172, note 10 on the connection between Achiyah HaShiloni and the Baal Shem Tov.

25. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 609.

Appendix

MASHPI'IM: SPIRITUAL MENTORS

TO LOVE A FELLOW JEW IS AN ADAPTATION OF *KUNTRES AHAVAS YISRAEL*, A booklet originally published by Kehot Publications in 1977 in response to the Rebbe's request for a book on this topic, which he referred to in a talk delivered in the week of *Parshas HaChodesh 5737*. The following is an excerpt of that talk:

We have reinstated the old custom, dating back to the times of the Alter Rebbe, of having a “*mashpia*”¹ (a spiritual mentor; literally, one who influences) in each place: a man for the men and a woman for the women.

Since we have been speaking recently about alacrity² in *avodah* — in connection with *mitvza* Pesach and the other *mitzvoym*³ — now is the time to initiate action in this area as well.

Those places that have hitherto not appointed *mashpi'im* should do so, and in those places that have already appointed *mashpiim*, the *mashpiim* should fulfill their role properly and promptly.

In those places where the *mashpiim* are doing their work properly, great is their merit — as the merit of one who services a community is well known⁴ — and a big thank you goes to them.

Giving thanks publicly also serves to provide them with further strength to do their *avodah* even better — “*mehadrin min*

1. The concept of a *mashpia* is explained at length in the *sichah* of *Yud Shevat 5737*.

2. See *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 21.

3. The *Mitzvah* Campaigns: campaigns instituted by the Rebbe to strengthen key areas of observance.

4. *Pirkei Avos* 5:18, in which there are three levels: he receives merit himself; he gives merits to others; and the merits of others are dependent on him.

hamehadrin,” which includes infusing so much into the *mashpiim* that anyone who comes into contact with them will also be affected.

Since the basis of the entire Torah is “Love your fellow as yourself” as the Alter Rebbe explains in chapter 32 of *Tanya*, and particularly as it is important for the increased success and strength⁵ of all those involved in *mitzvoym* that their work be permeated with a spirit of *abavas Yisrael*, then it is vital for the *mashpiim* to be well versed in the concept of *abavas Yisrael*.

For this purpose we will print a special edition of *Kuntres Abavas Yisrael* for the *mashpiim*, so that each one will be able to learn⁶ the issues in the *kuntres*. This will definitely enhance the ability of the *mashpiim* to have more of an effect on the men and boys, and the *mashpiyos* on the women and girls.

The merit of the congregation will also stand in their stead and they should be granted great success.

Those who have already been appointed and fulfill their duties as *mashpiim* will each receive a signed *kuntres*. Since it is necessary to do everything in an orderly fashion, anyone who has been appointed (by at least three people⁷) to be a *mashpia* should send his or her name and address into the secretariat, indicating the place and the people who have appointed them as a *mashpia*, and each will receive a *kuntres* in the mail.

It should be G-d’s will that learning the *kuntres* will increase — both for the *mashpiim* and those under their influence — the

5. See *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok* in his comments on the *Tanya*, p. 23.

6. It is obvious that this also applies to women, since they are obligated in the *mitzvab* of *abavas Yisrael* and women are obligated to learn the *halachab* of those laws in which they are obligated. (See *Hilchos Talmud Torah* of the Alter Rebbe, the end of ch. 1.) This is true of learning *Chasidus* in general, since many of the issues discussed in *Chasidus* are among the six *mitzvos* that are continually applicable (i.e., love of G-d, belief, etc., see Introduction to the *Sefer HaChinuch*) and therefore women are obligated to learn them. This is also true of the actions which result from these *mitzvos* as it is explained on the verse: “Know the G-d of your father (and through that) serve Him with a perfect heart” — “and what is the path to come to love and fear Him...,” see *Tanya*, *Kuntres Acharon*, p. 156b; *Rambam*, *Hilchos Yesodai HaTorah*, 2:2, in which both men and women are equal.

7. See *Yoreh De’ab*, ch. 228:21.

spirit of *achdus* which brings with it the blessing of our Father — as the Alter Rebbe explains in chapter 32 of *Tanya* that unity is the vessel for blessing — until the fulfillment of the greatest blessing, that the Almighty will take each Jew by the hand,⁸ one nation united through one Torah, and bring them all to the Holy Land with joy and goodness of heart.

* * *

On *Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-Pikudei Parshas HaChodesh* 5737 the Rebbe elaborated further:

To continue that which was spoken about *mashpiim*:

On the verse “And Moshe gathered,” the *Midrash*⁹ says:¹⁰ “...Why in this section is the expression *Vayakhel* (‘and he gathered’) used — an expression not ordinarily used in other areas of the Torah? G-d said to Moshe, “Go down¹¹ and gather large congregations on *Shabbos* in order that future generations should learn to gather large congregations on *Shabbos* to teach Torah publicly.”

From this it is understood that when a Jew gathers other Jews together on *Shabbos* to learn Torah with them — both matters of *halachah*, “to teach them the statutes of G-d,”¹² or “words of *Aggadab* which will instill the fear of Heaven into their hearts,”¹³ — this is done with the *shlichus* and power of Moshe, so much so that it is as if Moshe himself gathered them.

Since *Shabbos* is the day that blesses the other days of the week,¹⁴ it is understood that a gathering on *Shabbos* blesses the gatherings of Torah learning and *yiras Shomayim* (fear of Heaven) during the week. Particularly if they are a continuation

8. *Yesayahu* 27:12. See *Rashi, Nitzavim* 30:3.

9. *Yalkut Shimoni*, beginning of *Vayakhel*.

10. And quoted also in *halachah* — *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim*, ch. 290.

11. As explained in many places that in order to be *mashpia* it is necessary to contract one’s thought process and “go down.”

12. An expression of the Alter Rebbe in *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Zohar*, Vol. 2, pp. 63b, 88b.

or result of the gathering on *Shabbos*, it follows that they are also done with the *sblicbus* and power of Moshe.

This is why the *mashpiim* who gather Jews, teach them Torah, and instill in them *yiras Shomayim* should not be put off by any difficulties — because their work is done as a *sblicbus* from Moshe and a *sbliach* is considered as the person himself.¹⁵

A further point:

When the donations were offered to the *Mishkan*, they were presented not only by the men and women but also by the children as explained in *Avos D'R. Nossan*.¹⁶

From this is understood that “the entire congregation of the children of Israel” which Moshe gathered included not only men and women, but also children.¹⁷

Since all interpretations on one verse are connected,¹⁸ it follows that the imperative to gather congregations on *Shabbos* also extends to the gathering of children.

From here we see that the job of the *mashpiim* also extends to the children. It is also worthwhile that *mashpiim* should be appointed among the children themselves to influence other children of similar ages, to increase in Torah study, including the study of the *Twelve Pesukim* and sayings of the Sages¹⁹ and also the *mitzvos* that pertain to them.²⁰

(In addition to the children taking on more learning amongst themselves, this will also lead to an additional arousal among adults, as one sees in practice that when an adult observes a child performing a *mitzvah* or learning Torah with warmth and sincerity, it has a great effect on him.)

And when it will be explained that to influence other children is the *sblicbus* of Moshe and is done with the power of

15. *Kiddushin* 41b.

16. Ch. 11. *Or HaChayim* on *Parshas Vayakbel*. See also *Tzafnas Panei'ach* (who differentiates between the *Mishkan* and the *Beis HaMikdash*).

17. As explained in the *Or HaChayim*.

18. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 3, p. 782.

19. See at length the *sichos* of *Rosh Chodesh Iyar*, *Lag BaOmer*, and the 13th of *Tammuz* 5736.

20. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim* 343:3.

Moshe, (and even a child knows his great connection with Moshe, for as soon as he is able to speak²¹ he is taught, “*Torah tzivab...*,” which, in addition to the fact that the child knows that he is one of the congregation of Jacob and has received the Torah as an inheritance from Moshe, he also sees that the verse puts him as one of the congregation of Jacob in the same verse as Moshe,) it will have a great effect on him and he will not be put off by any difficulties. On the contrary, he will do his work with alacrity and energy, knowing that what is being done is the *sblichus* of Moshe.

* * *

As stated above, in order for the *mashpiim* to be effective, they must be filled with a spirit of *ahavas Yisrael*, and therefore a special printing of *Kuntres Ahavas Yisrael* will be printed for the *mashpiim*. A special *kuntres* will also be published for children with sayings about *ahavas Yisrael* which will be on a child’s level, starting with the saying: “Love your fellow as yourself; Rabbi Akiva said, this is a great principle of the Torah,” which is one of the *Twelve Pesukim*. This *kuntres* will be given to those children who are *mashpiim*, and it will definitely give added success to their work.

* * *

May it be the will of G-d that very soon, “...with our children, with our elderly, with our sons, and with our daughters, we will go (to the Redemption),” and with many children as was the Exodus from Egypt²² which is compared to the future Redemption,²³ and there should be the “returning of the hearts of the fathers on the sons”²⁴ and as *Rashi* explains “through the sons” (as stated above) that the children will have

21. See *Hilchos Talmud Torah of the Alter Rebbe*.

22. See *Sotab* 11a; *Shemos Rabbah* 1:12; *Targum Yonason, Bo* 12:37.

23. *Michab* 7:15.

24. *Malachi* end.

an effect on the adults. And all together we will go to greet our righteous *Mashiach* very soon.



THE TEXT OF THE PRIESTLY BLESSING INCLUDES: "TO BLESS THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WITH LOVE." THE SIMPLE MEANING IS THAT THE PRIESTLY BLESSING SHOULD BE GIVEN BY THE *KOHEN* WITH LOVE. ONE OF THE MYSTICS EXPLAINED THAT THE MEANING OF THE BLESSING IS THAT THE *KOHANIM* BLESS THE PEOPLE THAT A SPIRIT OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP SHOULD PREVAIL AMONG THEM.

(*Lubavitcher Rebbe's Memoirs*, Vol. 1, p. 343)

THE REBBE MAHARASH ONCE SAID: THE ALTER REBBE INVESTED TREMENDOUS EFFORT SO THAT THE CHASSIDIM SHOULD BE LIKE ONE FAMILY, EACH ONE SEARCHING FOR THE GOOD OF THE OTHER. THE HELP ONE OFFERS SHOULD BE GIVEN OUT OF A FEELING THAT THIS IS ONE LARGE FAMILY.

(*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 4, p. 34)

IN ADDITION TO GENERAL *AHAVAS YISRAEL*, THE REBBES OF CHABAD WANTED *ANASH* TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES AS ONE FAMILY. ONE OF THE WAYS TO DO THIS IS TO LET EACH OTHER KNOW OF GOOD AND HAPPY TIDINGS.

(*Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. 3, p. 323)

CHASSIDIM IN GENERAL AND *TEMIMIM* IN PARTICULAR NEED TO BE WARM. EACH HAS TO FEEL THAT MY *SIMCHAH* IS YOUR *SIMCHAH*, AND YOUR *SIMCHAH* IS MY *SIMCHAH*.

(*Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 1, p. 89)

THE BAAL SHEM TOV USED TO SAY: ONE CANNOT IMAGINE THE GREAT EFFECT OF LOVE FOR ONE'S FELLOW. FRIENDS WHO GATHER AND AROUSE MERCY FOR THEIR FELLOW WHO IS IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION HAVE THE ABILITY TO AVERT A DECREE OF SEVENTY YEARS. THEY CAN CHANGE A CURSE INTO A BLESSING AND DEATH INTO LENGTHY DAYS.

(*Sefer HaToldos* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. I, p. 131)

THE BAAL SHEM TOV USED TO SAY: A HEARTFELT *PEREK* OF *TEHILLIM*, THE EFFORT TO DO ANOTHER A FAVOR — BE IT MATERIAL OR SPIRITUAL — AND *AHAVAS YISRAEL*: THESE ARE THE CORRECT KEYS TO OPEN ALL THE LOCKS OF SUPERNAL MERCY, HEALING, SALVATION AND INCOME.

(*Sefer HaSichos 5700*, p. 76)