

The HINDA Institute

Helping Individuals Ascend
Monthly Newsletter



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Love According to the Rebbe

What if someone said to you, "I love you, but I don't like your children?" You'd probably say: "You may think that you love me, but you don't really. You don't care for what I care most deeply about. Obviously, you don't know anything about me, and you don't know what love is, either!"

The Torah commands us to "Love your fellow as yourself." The Torah also tells us to "Love the L-rd your G-d." This prompted the disciples of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812) to ask their master: "Which is the greater virtue, love of G-d or love of one's fellow?"

Rabbi Schneur Zalman replied: The two are one and the same. He then explained: G-d loves every one of His children. So ultimately, love of one's fellow is a greater show of love for G-d than simply loving G-d. Because true love means that you love what your loved one loves.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman was the founder of the Chabad branch of Chassidism, and his teachings on the love of G-d and man form an integral part of the philosophy and ethos of Chabad. Following Rabbi Schneur Zalman's passing in 1812, his son and successor, Rabbi DovBer, settled in the town of Lubavitch which served as the movement's headquarters for the next 102 years. Was it by coincidence or design that Rabbi DovBer chose a place whose name means "Town of Love"? Lubavitchers (as Chabad Chassidim are also known) will simply answer that there's no such thing as "coincidence", for even the seemingly minor events of our lives are guided by divine providence and are replete with significance.

On the 10th of Shevat, 5711 (January 17, 1951), (corresponding to February 6, 2017) a group of Chabad-Lubavitch Chassidim gathered at 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York. The occasion was the first anniversary of the passing of the sixth Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, and the official acceptance of the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who from that evening on would be known as the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe or simply, "the Rebbe".

That evening, the Rebbe also spoke about love ~ about the interrelation between love of G-d and love of one's fellow. But the issue had become more complex since the first Chabad Rebbe had spoken of it seven generations earlier.

Much had transpired in the interim: the "enlightenment" movement, which alienated many young Jews from their heritage; World War I, which displaced much of European Jewry (in 1915, the town of Lubavitch was destroyed and the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe fled to the interior of Russia); Communism's war on Judaism (in 1927, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe was arrested for his efforts to preserve Jewish faith and practice throughout the Soviet empire, and sentenced to death; international pressure achieved his release and emigration from Russia); and the Holocaust, which terminated 1000 years of flourishing Jewish life in Europe.

The destruction of European Jewry was a fresh memory to those present that winter evening in 1951 when the Rebbe assumed the mantle of leadership. Now they were in America, physically safe, but the spiritual future seemed bleak. The "melting pot" ethos of the New World did not encourage the cultivation of a Jewish identity and the observance of a Jewish way of life.

In Rabbi Schneur Zalman's day, it was universally accepted that a Torah way of life was the actualization of the bond between a Jew and his/her Father in Heaven. In 1951, the small minority of Torah-observant Jews in America were an object of contempt and derision by many of their own brethren. The most they could reasonably hope for was to persist in their own beliefs and try to pass them on to their children.

So it was not as simple as, "I love you, but I don't like your children." The feelings of the typical Torah-committed Jew in 1951 probably went something like this: "G-d, I love You and I love Your children ~ those who act towards You as children towards their father. I'm not that excited about those who disavow their bond with You." They might have even felt that their love of G-d was purer because it excluded those "rebellious" children.

That evening, after delivering the maamar (discourse of Chassidic teaching) which in the Chabad tradition marks a Rebbe's formal acceptance of his role, the Rebbe smiled and said: The Talmud says that "When you come to a city, do as its custom." Here in America it is customary to "make a statement"; I guess this means we should follow the local custom.

So the Rebbe issued a "statement":

The three loves ~ love of G-d, love of Torah and love of one's fellow ~ are one. One cannot differentiate between them, for they are of a single essence... And since they are of a single essence, each one embodies all three.

The Rebbe went on to explain that the fact that "each one embodies all three" has a twofold implication. It means that unless all three loves are present, neither of them is complete. But it also means that where any one of the three exist, it will eventually bring about all three.

A person who loves G-d, and is open to this love, will eventually come to love what G-d loves ~ all His children. And his love will drive him to wish to bring G-d's children close to Torah ~ because that's what G-d loves. One who loves the Torah, will eventually internalize the recognition that the Torah's purpose and *raison d'etre* is to lovingly bring together G-d and all His children. And one who truly loves a fellow Jew will inevitably come to love G-d, since love of one's fellow is, in essence, the love of G-d; and he will be driven to bring his fellow Jews close to Torah, which is the expression and actualization of their bond with G-d.

When there is love of G-d but not love of Torah and love of Israel, this means that the love of G-d is also lacking. On the other hand, when there is love of a fellow Jew, this will eventually bring also a love of Torah and a love of G-d...

So if you see a person who has a love of G-d but lacks a love of Torah and a love of his fellow, you must tell him that his love of G-d is incomplete. And if you see a person who has only a love for his fellow, you must strive to bring him to a love of Torah and a love of G-d ~ that his love toward his fellows should not only be expressed in providing bread for the hungry and water for the thirsty, but also to bring them close to Torah and to G-d.

When we will have the three loves together, we will achieve the Redemption. For just as this last Galut (exile) was caused by a lack of brotherly love, so shall the final and immediate Redemption be achieved by love for one's fellow.

In the six ensuing decades, the Rebbe's words became the mission statement of thousands of Chabad Houses and outreach centers throughout the world. More significantly, they heralded a sea change in the way that Jews regarded their heritage, their G-d, and each other. It is no exaggeration to say that the "statement" issued that evening by a 48-year-old Holocaust survivor changed the face of world Jewry.

Tu B'Shvat

Tu B'Shevat, the 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar—celebrated this year on Saturday, February 11, 2017—is the day that marks the beginning of a "new year" for trees. This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.

We mark the day of Tu B'Shevat by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. On this day we remember that "man is a tree of the field" (Deuteronomy 20:19), and reflect on the lessons we can derive from our botanical analogue.

Some folks think of people much as we think of cars on a highway: each with its own origin and destination, relating to one other only to negotiate lane changes and left-hand turns. For cars, closeness is danger, loneliness is freedom.

People are not cars. Cars are dead. People live. Living beings need one another, nurture one another, share destinies and reach them together. When you're alive, closeness is warmth, loneliness is suffocating.

People belong to families. Families make up communities. Communities make up the many colorful peoples of the world. And all those peoples make up a single, magnificent body with a single soul called humankind.

Some chop this body into seven billion fragments and roll it back into a single mush. They want each person to do his or her own thing and relate equally to every other individual on the planet. They don't see the point of distinct peoples. They feel such distinctions just get in the way.

But we are like leaves extending from twigs branching out from

larger twigs on branches of larger branches, until we reach the trunk and roots of us all. Each of us has our place on this tree of life, each its source of nurture—and on this the tree relies for its very survival.

None of us walks alone. Each carries the experiences of ancestors wherever he or she roams, along with their troubles, their traumas, their victories, their hopes and their aspirations. Our thoughts grow out from their thoughts, our destinies are shaped by their goals. At the highest peak we ever get to, there they are, holding our hand, pushing us upward, providing the shoulders on which to stand. And we share those shoulders, that consciousness, that heritage with all the brothers and sisters of our people.

That's why your own people are so important: If you want to find peace with any other person in the world, you've got to start with your own brothers and sisters. Until then, you haven't yet found peace within your own self. And only when you've found peace within yourself can you help us find peace for the entire world.

Every Jew is a brother or sister of a great family of many thousands of years. Where a Jew walks, there walk sages and martyrs, heroes and heroines, legends and miracles, all the way back to Abraham and Sarah, the first two Jews who challenged the whole world with their ideals. There walk the tears, the blood and the *chutzpah* of millennia, the legacy of those who lived, yearned and died for a world to come, a world the way it was meant to be.

Their destiny is our destiny. In us they are fulfilled. In all of us and every one of us, and all of us together. For we are all one.

When one Jew does an act of kindness, all our hands extend with his or hers. If one Jew should fall, all of us stumble. If one suffers, we all feel pain. When one rejoices, we are all uplifted. In our oneness we will find our destiny, and our destiny is to be one. For we are a single body, breathing with a single set of lungs, pulsating with a single heart, drawing from a single well of consciousness.

We are one. Let it be with love.

My Moment with the Rebbe

By Chaim Mendelsohn

I am standing in line together with tens of thousands of other Jews from all religious backgrounds and affiliations. In the sweltering New York City heat, we wait for over four hours for our moment to stand in front of the Rebbe's gravesite. To reflect, to say a prayer, to ask for a personal blessing.

As I wait in the long line, I take a few moments to observe the expressions of those waiting along with me. Solemn, serious, intense. Most people utilize their time to read words of Psalms or study from other sacred literature. Some wear long beards and black fedora hats identifying them as Chabadniks; others wear the wide felt hats and long sidecurls of other chassidic groups. There are still others who have clearly donned kippot just for this occasion. Two African-American women stand in line, clutching pictures of the Rebbe in their hands as they patiently wait for their moment. There is one thing that unites us all. We are all admirers of the Rebbe. We have all been influenced by his leadership, some directly, some indirectly.

My 11-year-old son is standing next to me. He is getting restless. We have already been waiting in line for over two hours. It takes me back to a time when I was 11 years old. I was also standing in a long line for hours. I too was restless. I was impatiently waiting for my moment with the Rebbe. I would walk by the Rebbe and receive a crisp dollar bill from the Rebbe's hand. The Rebbe would stare at me with his penetrating eyes. His stare was so intense, it felt as if he was peering right into my soul. He would wish me a blessing for success.

In fact, the Rebbe would spend every Sunday greeting thousands of men, women and children. Jews and non-Jews of all backgrounds and affiliations would come to receive a blessing and a dollar bill, relishing the opportunity to see the Rebbe face-to-face. Chief rabbis, world leaders, senior politicians, the Hollywood elite and Jewish activists, would all come seeking inspiration and direction. The impoverished, the heartbroken, widows and orphans would all come for their moment with the Rebbe. All would leave feeling motivated and more empowered to effectively realize their personal potential. To positively influence the lives of others. To selflessly contribute toward a better society.

The dollar was meant to be given to charity. It represented the Rebbe's philosophy of life, that when two people get together for whatever reason, it should always directly benefit a third individual.

I was lucky to have waited in those long lines many times. I received dollars, coins, honey cake, and various different sacred books of Torah. Every time, I left with the same overwhelming emotion. I was a little boy, but when I passed by the Rebbe, I didn't feel like a little boy. I felt like I was important, like I had distinct and consequential value. The Rebbe didn't treat me like a child. His serious eyes begged me to make a difference. His expression was loving yet demanding. I did not want to let him down. I vowed that I would make him proud.

I will never forget the first time I experienced the festival of Simchat Torah with the Rebbe. Hours before

the hakafof service, the traditional dancing with the Torah, my father brought me to the Rebbe's synagogue. My father warned me that the crowd would be enormous and the pushing intense. Tens of thousands of guests would travel from across the globe to spend Simchat Torah in the Rebbe's court. Despite my father's warnings, I was completely unprepared for the chaotic scene that I witnessed. It was literally a sea of humanity. Every inch of space was filled with people clamoring to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe dancing with the Torah scroll in his arms. Benches-turned-bleachers were constructed around the walls of the synagogue, like in a stadium, five or six rows high.

The climax of the evening was when the Rebbe would walk from the front of the synagogue, clutching the Torah in his hand, to the middle of the room, where he would dance on a raised platform. The Rebbe would walk down a narrow path that was separated by two long tables.

My father and I had come early enough to secure a place at one of those tables. As the evening progressed and the numbers of congregants continued to grow, my father tightly wrapped both his arms around me to make sure I wouldn't slip out of his grip. The anticipation was mounting. In mere moments the Rebbe would walk toward the middle of the room. The excitement was so real, so genuine. You could feel it. You could almost touch it.

The Rebbe turned around. He began to walk. The crowd surged, pushing forward, trying to get just a little closer to the Rebbe. I could feel my father losing his grip on me. His embrace weakened. I did my best to push myself backward into my father. It was useless, impossible, a futile exercise. I slipped off the table. Fear overcame me. I could see the Rebbe coming toward me. I had nowhere to go. Time stopped. It felt like an eternity. I started to cry.

Thankfully, someone very strong came to my rescue. He reached over, lifted me in the air, and quickly moved me out of the way. I ended up in the arms of a nice man, who comforted me and positioned me so that I could watch the incredible scene unfold.

The Rebbe danced alone. He walked around to every side of the platform and danced, ensuring that everyone in the room had a chance to capture the experience. It was truly Simchat Torah. The Rebbe exuded simchah, happiness, joy. You were able to sense the Rebbe's desire to share his simchah with everyone in the room. To lift up everyone in the room.

It is what happened next that had the most impact on me, an 11-year-old boy.

The Rebbe was walking back toward the front of the synagogue. Anyone who was within arm's length of the Rebbe stretched out their arm to be able to touch and kiss the Torah. The Rebbe walked slowly. I wished I could have the chance to kiss the Torah. It was impossible. I was just too far. I clumsily stretched out my arm. Suddenly, the Rebbe stopped. He noticed my outstretched arm. He looked me straight in the eye, with the same penetrating, loving stare I would receive when he handed me a dollar bill. He extended the Torah as far as he could; I stretched out my arm as far as I could. We met. I managed to kiss the Rebbe's Sefer Torah.

The Rebbe could have just ignored my outstretched arm and longing face. After all, I was only a little kid. I

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NOTICES:

Please make a request to your Chaplain that you would like a visit from a Rabbi in MARCH.

HINDA Family Division Connect your family member (parent, spouse, sibling, child etc.) with our Family Division! Please contact us for more information.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: All mail sent to the Hinda Institute should be addressed to our Inmate Advocate. Letters should NOT be addressed to Rabbi Scheiman. Please use this mailing address to contact us by mail:

Inmate Advocate
The Hinda Institute
9401 Margail Ave

Des Plaines, IL 60016

Housing Resource: For any families trying to find a rental for their loved one to parole to upon release. Contact Mr. Marcus. This applies even to register with the state upon release. There is a fee for his services. Don Yosef Marcus—(847) 361-7770

Upcoming Jewish Dates:

Fast of Esther is Thursday March 9, 2017. The fast begins around 4:45 am and ends around 6:30pm.

Purim begins Saturday night, March 11 and continues through Sunday, March 12, 2017. Purim observances include A) Megillah reading by night and day B) Giving gifts of food C) Giving gifts to the poor D) festive meal.

Please put in the appropriate requests to your chaplain 45 days in advance.

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would get over it. But in the Rebbe's eyes, I was not a young child; I played an integral, crucial part in G-d's master plan. I had an important mission. I was no longer an 11-year-boy who was filled with fear and anxiety over being separated from my father. I was now a confident young man, ready to carry my weight.

This was my moment with the Rebbe. A moment that lasts forever.

I often think of my moment. It has carried me forward for the past 20 years. It was the inspiring factor that convinced me to join the Rebbe's army of shlichim—a group of over 4,000 activists in over 81 countries determined to realize the Rebbe's dream of bringing goodness, kindness, warmth and light to every corner of the globe. I have encountered many challenges in my years of shlichus, and it has been my moment with the Rebbe that has helped me persevere.

I am finally standing in front of the Rebbe's gravesite. Through eyes brimming with tears, I read the Rebbe's name etched in the tombstone. I feel the deep void. I long for the Rebbe's physical presence, guidance and leadership. I close my eyes. I relive my moment. I reaffirm my pledge to dedicate my life to the ideas and ideals of the Rebbe.

I look down at my son. His face is shining. He is saying his chapter of Psalms. There are no tears in his eyes. This is his moment with the Rebbe.

I know that he is as determined as I am to fulfill his mission. He no longer feels like he is an 11-year-old kid. He feels proud, empowered, confident. He recognizes that he is a valuable component of the Rebbe's vision. http://www.chabadsiu.com/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/2893830/jewish/My-Moment-with-the-Rebbe.htm

Jewish Joke

An atheist professor was walking in the local park when he noticed little Yankel proclaiming his belief in G-d.

Little Yankel was standing on a park bench shouting "G-D IS ALL-MIGHTY, HE GAVE MOSES THE ABILITY TO PART THE RED SEA!!!" when the professor walked up to him. "Do you truly believe in that statement little boy?" said the professor. "Of course I do, G-d is that powerful" retorted Yankel.

"I can disprove your theory by using Geographical science." "How?" "Did you know that the Red sea was only about 10 inches deep when Moses crossed it?"

Little Yankel fell silent and the Professor walked away pleased with himself.

He walked for about 10 feet when he heard Yankel proclaiming how almighty G-d is even louder. The professor looked at the boy again and asked him "How can you keep proclaiming after I disproved your al powerful G-d?"

Little Yankel looked at the professor and said "G-d is still all powerful because he was able to drown the entire Egyptian Army in only 10 inches of water."