

LOVING EACH OTHER (3)

The Power of Unity

Once, when the Baal Shem Tov was *davening* together with his *talmidim*, they finished first, and after waiting for a while, they figured it would still take a long time, so they went off to attend to their personal affairs, and later returned.

When the Baal Shem Tov finally finished *davening*, he told them the following *mashal*: A king once saw a beautiful, colorful bird perched at the very tip of a tall tree. In order to catch it, he ordered a few people to form a human ladder by standing on each other's shoulders. However, while they were getting higher and higher, the lower people began to break up and so they all began to fall. The mission was not accomplished because they were not all connected the entire time.

So, too, explained the Baal Shem Tov: While we were *davening* together we were all connected and I could climb high, but when you each left and attended to your personal needs, it all collapsed and I could not achieve what I wanted to.

The Baal Shem Tov further explained that every Yid has a letter in the Torah, and just as the whole Torah is one unity, so too we all have to be connected to each other as one, and then we are able to achieve greater heights.

(אור החכמה פ' בהעלותך)

The *Tzemach Tzedek* once said: The first four letters of the *alef-beis* – *alef*, *beis*, *gimmel*, *daled* – stand for the words: *Achdus* – *Bracha*, *Gava* – *Dalus*. When there is unity, there is *bracha*, but when there is pride and hence discord, the result is poverty.

To this the Rebbe added: If in dealings in the realm of *gashmiyus*, unity brings

bracha, surely in the realm of *ruchniyus*, *achdus* is the key to success.

(אג"ק ח"א ע' קנא)

Loving the Beloved

At the young age of sixteen, the Mitteler Rebbe was appointed to guide a group of chassidim of his father, the Alter Rebbe, and to teach them the *maamorim*.

Once, during a *farbrengen*, Reb Aharon Strasheler, the Mitteler Rebbe's close friend and *chavrusa*, raised his glass and with tears in his eyes wished himself to be blessed with true *ahavas HaShem*. Soon after, the Mitteler Rebbe raised his glass and wished himself to be blessed with true *ahavas Yisroel*.

The participants in the *farbrengen* began to debate which of these two loves is greater. Their uncertainty continued for several weeks before they decided to ask the Alter Rebbe. After suitable preparation and at an opportune time they presented him with their dilemma, to which he replied in his customary singsong:

"Both love of *HaShem* and love of Yidden are equally engraved in every Yid's *neschama*, *ruach* and *nefesh*. Nevertheless, the *possuk* states clearly: 'I have loved you, says HaShem.' It follows that love of Yidden is superior – for you love whom your Beloved loves."

(אג"ק מוהר"י צ"ח ג' ע' תכג, תלז, היום יום כ"ח ניסן)

In a letter to a young chossid the Frierdiker Rebbe warns him, "One must be very careful not to cause pain or embarrassment to anyone, especially a fine young woman, and when it concerns a personal matter, which is unforgivable."

He then quotes the Rebbe Maharash on the critical significance of *ahavas Yisroel*:

"Of what good is *Chassidus* and *yiras Shomayim* if the main quality, *ahavas Yisroel*, is lacking? And even worse, if one person *ch"v* pains another."

(אג"ק מוהר"י צ"ח ג' ע' רפט, היום יום ח' מנ"א)

Love and Unity

Ahavas Yisroel refers to the *mitzva* of relating to others by acts of loving-kindness. *Achdus Yisroel* refers to the reasoning and feeling underlying the acts of love – one's awareness that *Bnei Yisroel* are like the organs of one body.

Why does the Torah only command us about *ahavas Yisroel*, which leads to the actions, and not about *achdus Yisroel*, the awareness that will automatically lead to such actions?

One explanation is the following: As a rule, the Torah and its *mitzvos* focus on one's practical actions, and not on the thoughts and feelings behind those actions. This is evident from the way the Torah discusses the details of all practical *mitzvos*. Here, too, the Torah only commands us to act in a kindly manner; the explanations are discussed in Torah *sheb'al peh* and in *Chassidus*.

(תו"מ תשד"מ ח"ב ע' 664)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Are the heights reached through *achdus* a reward or a natural result? Does it matter how that *achdus* is achieved?
- If a person's *ahavas Yisroel* is not related to *ahavas HaShem* is it still superior?

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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Hora'ah Rechovot

Gifts on Shabbos

I was invited for a Shabbos meal and would like to present my hosts with a bottle of wine. May I present it to them at the meal?

- Chazal decreed that one may not buy or sell on Shabbos or Yom Tov even if the price of the sale is not mentioned, since one may come to record the sale in writing.¹ Likewise they forbade giving gifts. Here are some exceptions:
- **Food:** Food and drink intended for Shabbos may be given as a gift since the gift is for the purpose of Shabbos use.²
- **Dish:** A dish that wasn't *toivled* may be given to a non-Jew so that it can be used (a non-Jew's dishes do not require *tevilah*) since the gift is for the purpose of Shabbos use.³
- **Children's Groups:** Non-food prizes should be given or acquired after Shabbos. Some are lenient since it is for the purpose of simchas Shabbos and a *mitzva*.⁴
- **Lulav and Talis:** One may give a *lulav* or *talis* as a "*matana al mnas l'hachzir*" since it is evident that he is giving it to him specifically for to perform the *mitzvah* and not to keep, but one should not give it as an absolute gift.⁵ (For *chinuch* some⁶ permit giving the *lulav* as a complete gift to a child, since the prohibition of *matana* is on the receiver and for the sake of *chinuch* this prohibition is waived.)
- **Bar Mitzvah Gift:** It is best not give the gift on Shabbos. However, when necessary *acharonim* advise transferring ownership of the gift before Shabbos – by having someone else lift it before Shabbos on behalf of the Bar Mitzvah boy,⁷ or afterwards – by stipulating that the receiver will acquire it after Shabbos is over.⁸
- **In conclusion:** One may give a bottle of wine on Shabbos since it is for the purpose of the Shabbos meal.

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| 1. שוע"ר ש"ו ס"ד. | 5. מג"א סי' ש"ו סקט"ו ושוע"ר ש"ו |
| 2. שוע"ר ש"ו סט"ו, שכ"ג ש"א. | 6. שו"ת בית יצחק סי' ק"ו, ולקטן כל דבר שהוא משום חינוך מצוה מותר לספות לו איסור בידים – שוע"ר שמ"ג ס"ח. |
| 3. שוע"ר שכ"ג ס"ח. | 7. שש"כ פכ"ט סל"א. |
| 4. ארחות השבת פכ"ב ס"נ והע" ס"ח, אבל צע"ג לדעת רבינו ש"ו ס"ז. וראה בס' הקטן והלכותיו פי"ט סקכ"א. | 8. שו"ת מהר"י אסאד סי' פ"ג. |

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

מזל טוב!
בשמחה רבה שולחים אנו ברכותינו
להת' מנחם מענדל שי' לוינ' וב"ג מרים שתחיי שטראקס
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטומ"צ
מרכז אנ"ש

OUR HEROES

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev



Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev was born in the year ת"ק (1740). After his *chassunah*, he went to study from the Maggid of Mezritch. He served as the *Rov* of the city of Berditchev and was one of the most famous Rebbes. Reb Levi Yitzchak was known as the "*saneigor*" (advocate) of *Yidden*, always finding merit in every situation. He was *niftar* on the 25th of Tishrei, תק"ע (1809).

Reb Levi Yitzchak would always speak in the defense of *Klal Yisroel*. On Yom Kippur before Kol Nidrei a large crowd gathered in *shul*, including many who attended *shul* only once a year. Reb Levi Yitzchak would run from his place in the front of the *shul* to the back to take one of these people to the *mizrach*, while muttering, "*Ribono Shel Olam!* I would not trade the 'worst' Jew for the 'best' goy!"

Once, a Yid approached Reb Levi Yitzchak for a *bracha*. The Rebbe told him he should do a certain thing and he would be helped. When the man left the room he stood puzzled how he would succeed on such a difficult task. The Rebbe sensed the man's thoughts, and called out to him, "*Yungerman!* Don't think about it. You could ruin it." (Since the power of the *bracha* was dependent on the man's belief in the words of the *tzaddik*.)

Reb Mordechai Liepler was active in *pidyon shvuyim* and freeing young men from serving in the Czar's army. Eventually, the government found out and planned to arrest him, so Reb Mordechai hurried to the Alter Rebbe for a *bracha*. At that time, the Alter Rebbe's granddaughter had just married the grandson of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev in Zhlobin, and Reb Mordechai arrived during the week of *sheva brachos*. When he presented his request, the Alter Rebbe advised him to approach his *mechutan*, the *Rov* of Berditchev.

The *gabboim* of Reb Levi Yitzchak did not want to allow him to disturb the *tzaddik's* schedule, but when they heard his plight—especially the Alter Rebbe's instruction—they advised him to hide in the room behind a curtain, and then present his request at an appropriate moment. From his hiding place, Reb Mordechai could watch Reb Levi Yitzchak's assiduous *avoda*.

First, the *tzaddik* sat at a table in *dveikus* as both *gabboim* inserted spoonfuls of food into his mouth, with only small portions of it actually being eaten. The meal was soon over and the elderly *tzaddik* was laid down on a bed. His *gabboim* sat near him, one at his head and the other at his feet, and they simultaneously read from *Mishnayos* and from *Zohar* respectively. The *tzaddik* was deep asleep, yet every so often he would stop them and correct their reading. After a short while Reb Levi Yitzchak rose and washed *neggel vasser*.

At that moment, Reb Mordechai came out of his place and asked for a *bracha*. At first Reb Levi Yitzchak told him off for endangering his life by being involved in activities which opposed the government, but upon hearing that it was at the Alter Rebbe's instruction he conceded, "If so, you are righteous in your case. Go in peace!" And that is what happened.

(מגדל עז' ע"י קסד)

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Lubavitch Way



The Lubavitch standards in outreach activities are set high, though when others were active, despite them being not in line with Lubavitch guidelines, they received encouragement from the Rebbe. The prominent *Mizrachi* leader and *rosh yeshiva* of Kfar Chasidim, Harav Moshe Tzvi Neriah, is one example.

In Iyar 5717 (1957), Harav Neriah was in a *yechidus* where he discussed his successful youth movement '*Bnei Akiva*.' He told the Rebbe that often he feels great regret about the fact that in his programs there is no separation of the genders, among other inconsistencies with the Torah way.

The Rebbe answered:

"As long as you understand that this breach is indeed a tragedy - *nor es kumt rateven fun a gresere umglick* (it only that it is coming to save us from a greater tragedy) - you may continue in your work..."

In contrast, when Lubavitch Foundation of the UK wished to create a similar program in order to curb intermarriage, they received a sharp answer from 770:

"This is not the Lubavitch way. Even if a Halachic *heter* is found, this kind of work should be left for others..."

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה