

SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Volume 21

Beshalach, Sicha 1 (Second Sicha of the week)

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

“Yisroel camped (singular) there” – Rashi: “Like one person with one heart” The physical world and our bodies divide, and the G-dly energy that transcends creation, unites. The transcendent energy of the Torah, which can unite our hearts, was not yet accessible, according to Rashi, until we received the Torah. Rather, we united as Yisroel, based on our being truly one nation with the shared origin of our Neshamos. This unity as ‘one person’ led to our shared anticipation for Torah ‘with one heart.’

At the end of the Sicha the Rebbe directs us to disseminate Sheva mitzvos, describing how Matan Torah allowed even Goyim to experience Elokus that transcends creation. This is why the Rambam writes that a Goy needs to do Sheva mitzvot as a commandment from Hashem.

Ahavas Yisroel of the Alter Rebbe!

Reb Mendel Futerfas would relate:

Three great Chassidic leaders were famous for their Ahavas Yisrael: Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, and the Alter Rebbe.

Rabbi Zusha was a living example of “Love covers up all iniquities.” What others would perceive as a glaring deficiency in a person, or even an outright sin, would not “register” in Zusha’s eyes and mind. Rabbi Zusha was simply incapable of seeing anything negative in a fellow Jew.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's love found expression in his continuous Limud Zechus efforts, as an advocate for the people of Israel. Unlike Rabbi Zusha, he was not blind to their misdeeds and failings; but he always practiced "judging every man to the side of merit" to find a justification for, and even a positive aspect for, his behavior.

The Alter rebbe's Ahavas Yisrael was not the refusal to see the deficiencies of a fellow Jew or even the endeavor to transform them into merits, but an unequivocal love regardless of their spiritual state. He loved the most iniquitous transgressor with the same boundless love with which he loved the greatest tzaddik; he loved them as G-d loves them—as a father loves his children, regardless of who and what they are.

Because he is lacking you have an even deeper love for that child!

Rabbi Dovid Edelman, ob'm, devoted Shliach of the FR and the Rebbe for 70 years, related: I was once standing with friends near the hallway of the "770" building when our Rebbe (then known as the Ramas"n) emerged from the elevator, coming down from the Freidiker Rebbe's study. He asked us if we wanted a frische vort, a fresh insight that he had just heard from his father-in-law the Rebbe.

The Rebbe had asked the Freidiker Rebbe how he should be interacting with the many Jews that come to his office, some of them not yet observant and some very alienated from Torah and mitzvot. Nevertheless, he greeted every person friendly, without reproaching them and he asked for guidance from the Rebbe if he was acting correctly.

The Freidiker Rebbe told him that "Hashem created the nature of a father and a mother, that no matter how many children they have, there is enough love for all their children. In a family, however, where one child has a problem with a hand – he can't move his hand – or a problem with a leg – he can't move his foot – for that child, the father and mother have a special love, a special closeness because he is lacking".

"So, if a Jew comes into your office and he is observing all the mitzvos, you love him wholeheartedly. And if a Jew comes to your office and he is Jewishly "missing a hand" – he doesn't put on Tefillin, or "he's missing a foot" – he doesn't go to shul, then for him, you have a deeper love, because he is lacking. The more he is lacking, the greater your love must be to this Jew!"

A Brigadier General gets a surprise Shlichus!

Rabbi Dr. Israel Drazin related: (Israel served for over three decades in the US Army, ending as Assistant Chief of Chaplains of the US Army, where he held the rank of Brigadier General)

In 1986, I had the privilege of meeting the Lubavitcher Rebbe at a farbrengen in New York. During the farbrengen, one of the chasidim said that the Rebbe wanted me to join him on the dais. When I came up, the Rebbe spoke to me in a mixture of English and Yiddish, which I understood. He blessed me to be “a chaplain in God’s army” and then he said something startling.

“May the Almighty bless you ... to influence the gentile soldiers, as well, in fulfilling the Sheva Mitzvot Bnei Noach – the Seven Noahide Laws. Certainly, the other gentile chaplains will not be upset that you are mixing into their affairs, because you will be helping them. And all this will help bring our righteous Mashiach.”

“I will try to do that,” I responded, but it was a non-committal statement. I was thinking to myself, “It’s absurd that the Rebbe would expect me to stand before non-Jews and speak to them about the Seven Noahide Laws.”

While I knew, of course, about that these basic commandments for all of humanity to live by – prohibiting blasphemy, idolatry, adultery, murder, theft, and cruelty to animals, and mandating the establishment of courts of law – I could not imagine myself preaching this as a general in the armed forces. As far as I was concerned, it was a “no-go” right from the very beginning.

But, when I had a chance to think about it some more, I said, “Those things that seem to be the most difficult in life are the very things that one should try and do.” So, I decided to try and do it. I developed a speech, which I tried out first on a small Christian audience – and they liked it.

After I had given this speech many times, I thought that I should inform the Rebbe about my success – which had come because of his recommendation – so I wrote a letter to him. In my letter, I said that, although I’m not a follower of Lubavitch but a follower of Maimonides, “nevertheless, I have followed your advice. And I want you to know that I have now spoken all over the world about the Seven Noahide Laws, and my speech has been very well received.” I ended by writing that “I hope the Rebbe is pleased with my initial effort to comply with his request.”

He wrote back, making it a point of saying that he was also a follower of Maimonides and that Maimonides would have surely approved of my effort since he saw the dissemination of the Seven Noahide Laws as an obligation of every Jew.

He went on: "May G-d grant that the declaration of our Sages, 'He who has one-hundred desires two-hundred and so forth,' be fulfilled also in connection with your said activities. Namely, that you should continue using your good influence in a manner that would be doubly effective and then doubly again, from two hundred to four hundred." He concluded by wishing me again "the utmost success in all my good efforts."
