



The Rebbe

AN APPRECIATION

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Introduction

His Legacy is Everywhere

They are everywhere. In Siberia and Congo. In Alaska and Florida. In Israel and Europe. In Moscow and New York. Everywhere.

Their programs are conducted in schools and on the streets, in synagogues and in homes, in offices and in prisons, in cyberspace and one-on-one – formally and informally.

They are connected yet independent. They are traditional in their personal lives, yet liberal in their outreach. No one is excluded from their embrace.

What's behind these Lubavitcher Chasidim, and what motivates them?

The Rebbe. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory.

Even now, more than a decade after his passing on the third of Tamuz, 5754 (June 12, 1994), hundreds of young couples, stirred by his vision and passion, feel privileged to uproot themselves from home and hearth to take up permanent posts as the Rebbe's emissaries – far from family, community, spiritual roots, comfort and amenities.

In greater numbers than ever, Jews everywhere continue to be inspired by the Rebbe's teachings and guidance.

An endless stream of people – Chasidim and non-Chasidim, men and women, boys and girls, people from all walks of life – flock to his resting place from all corners of the world.

Some come seeking a blessing, others ▶



arrive asking for intercession on High on their behalf, still others visit to share a joyous occasion – the birth of a child, a Bar Mitzvah, a wedding.

What is it about the Rebbe that exudes so much love? What is it about the Rebbe that makes him so present even now – binding so many to him so deeply?

The following is an attempt to express personal appreciation of the Rebbe by exploring some of the manner in which he expressed himself in his discourses, correspondence, personal conduct, and *modus operandi*.

This essay does not and cannot adequately render the Rebbe's personality and conduct. Nor is it capable of touching upon the Rebbe's immense scholarship. It is instead a humble endeavor to capture some sense of what the Rebbe means to so many – and his uniqueness and contribution to world Jewry. It is an effort to record and share a little bit of the Rebbe's consuming passion in the service of G-d, his love, his study of Torah, and his vision of a world perfected.

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Never Stopped

“The Rebbe was watched 24 hours a day. Yet there was not one minute in which his personality did not shine.”

—Rabbi Adin Even Yisrael (Steinsaltz)

The Rebbe Never Stopped

The Rebbe never stopped. He was active seven days a week, 365 days a year, often twenty hours a day or more.

During 44 years of leadership, he did not take a single vacation, nor a personal or sick day. This is neither exaggeration nor legend. It is a matter of record, as the Rebbe’s daily schedule was public knowledge.

During those 44 years, the Rebbe delivered thousands of public discourses. He responded to millions of letters and requests for advice and blessings from men and women everywhere, and to questions from organizations and institutions of all stripes. These requests ran the full gamut of human experience: health, marriage, children, livelihood, education, business, Torah and the sciences.

The Rebbe initiated, guided and supervised a global network of Lubavitch institutions. In personal meetings he counseled countless individuals – Torah scholars, simple folk and heads of state, men and women, hoary elders and children, business titans and troubled teens, men of letters and the ill and infirm.

Every Sunday from 1986 until his stroke in 1992, the Rebbe would stand for many hours without interruption, greeting people, listening and offering blessings and advice while distributing to each person a dollar to give to charity. These sessions often lasted more than seven hours – and by this time the Rebbe was already in his late eighties!

The Rebbe spent the larger portion of his day immersed in Torah study and prayer.

Yet somehow, everyone – especially his Chasidim – took this all for granted.

No one ever questioned how such a schedule, such a lifestyle, was humanly possible. The Rebbe made it all seem so natural, so organic, so effortless, that one easily forgot that his was a schedule beyond the capacity of any ordinary human being.

All these, and more ...

Some saw the Rebbe as the consummate Ohev Yisrael, lover of all Jews. Others observed his *yir’as shamayim*, his reverence for G-d... Some recognized his complete selflessness. Others were awed by his genius in Torah scholarship... ▶



Some saw him as the man of unparalleled activism. Others experienced the impact of his profound wisdom and keen insight... Some saw him as the paragon of *mesiras nefesh*, absolute self-sacrifice. Others perceived him as the catalyst of a Jewish revolution... Some recognized him as the ultimate leader. Others viewed him as the ultimate Chasid, devoted entirely to *his* Rebbe... And still others appreciated him as the ultimate scholar and intellectual.


The Rebbe was all of these.

THE WISH TO SHARE

“He who has a generous eye, shall be blessed, for he gave of his bread to the poor” (*Proverbs 22:9*). According to our sages, this refers to Moses whose innate generosity impelled him to share insights of the Torah – even those which he was not commanded to relay.

On a number of occasions the Rebbe shared teachings and stories that he had heard from his father-in-law and predecessor, Rabbi Yoseph Yitzchok Schneersohn, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, adding that he had not been given explicit permission to make them public but was nevertheless taking the liberty to do so, as “my father-in-law knew I would be unable to resist sharing with others...”

Yet it is his essence, which transcends the particulars of his person, from which all of the above emanated. From the very depth of his *neshamah* (soul), from the core of his being, the Rebbe revered G-d, loved every Jew, and was devoted to Torah and the fulfillment of G-d’s will.

The Rebbe communicated many of his thoughts and insights to us out of his deep desire to give to others. By sharing, he afforded us a glimpse into the window of his soul, a reflection of his spirit. 

A DIFFERENT WORLD

For the Rebbe, nothing was ordinary. Everything that he touched took on new light, new life, new depth, new meaning. The presence of G-d was palpable. An ordinary day became a holiday. An ordinary person became extraordinary. A routine *mitzvah* became precious. A simple Talmudic exchange became a profound principle. A minor footnote in the life of his Rebbe became a life’s lesson. Any mundane object was a spark, any episode a lesson in the service of G-d. Every occurrence was a stage in the fulfillment of the Divine plan. Every occasion – good or seemingly bad – was a challenge to help us better serve the Almighty. The Rebbe shed new light on every subject. He cut to the core of every matter.

Unconditional Love

“The Lubavitcher Rebbe undertook the most daring spiritual initiative ever... to search out every Jew in love as they were once hunted down in hate...”

—Dr. Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the UK

A Boundless Capacity to Love Unconditionally

The Rebbe’s boundless love for all Jews was legendary. He would go to extraordinary lengths to help any Jew, spiritually or materially, regardless of location or spiritual status.

The pain of any Jew was his pain. The joy of a Jew was his joy.

In his love for all Jews, the Rebbe did not distinguish between Chasidim and non-Chasidim, observant or non-observant. There were no labels. A Jew is a Jew, period. A “piece” of G-d, placed in a body and planted in this world.

Scholar or layperson, college student or Chasid, happy or dejected, wealthy or destitute – all were welcome. All belonged. All were embraced.

The Rebbe’s smile would heal the aching heart. The Rebbe was always there, offering counsel and blessing, comfort and hope, and often material help as well.

The Rebbe taught – through word and deed – that love for one’s fellow is not ▶

NO SMALL JEW

The only Jewish kid in his class, a seventh grader on the Caribbean island of Curaçao developed serious problems in school because of his minority religious status. Without prompting, the Rebbe surprised the tiny Jewish community of Curaçao by sending a pair of emissaries who helped out the family in their distress.

Deeply grateful, the boy’s father sent the Rebbe an emotional letter, thanking him for coming to the assistance of “a small Jew in Curaçao.”

The Rebbe replied:

“There is no such thing as ‘a small Jew’... a Jew must never underestimate his or her *tremendous* potential...”



PROTESTING A SLIGHT TO A JEW

"After the very long interval, I was pleased to receive your letter of June 17th, in which you write about your wedding. . .

"You write about meeting a Jew in the course of your travels who comes to the synagogue to help make up a minyan, yet at the same time reads the newspaper.

Everyone, of course, reacts to an experience in the way that is closest to him. Thus, for my part, I make the following two extreme observations. First, I see in it the extreme Jewish attachment which one finds in every Jew. For here is a person who has wandered off to a remote part of the world, and has become so far removed, not only geographically, but also mentally and

intellectually, as to have no concept of what prayer is or what a House of G-d is, etc., yet one finds in him that Jewish spark, or as the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Chabad, expressed it in his Tanya – 'The Divine soul which is truly a part of G-d.' This Divine soul, which is an inheritance of every Jew, seeks expression as best it can, and in the case of this particular Jew, it seeks expression in at least enabling other Jews to pray as a congregation; and he, therefore, goes out of his way to help them and at the same time be counted with them.


"My other observation, following from the above, is as follows: If, where the odds are so great against Jewish observance, a Jew can remain active and conscious of his Jewishness, it can easily be seen what great things could have been accomplished with this particular Jew if at the right time he would have received a proper education early in his life, or at least the proper spiritual guidance in his adult life. This consideration surely emphasizes the mutual responsibility which rests upon all Jews, and particularly on those who can help others . . .

"We must never despair of any Jew, and at the same time we must do all we can to take the fullest advantage of our capacities and abilities to strengthen the Jewish consciousness among all Jews with whom we come in contact. For one can never tell how far-reaching such influence can be. . ."



based on surface considerations like the other person's social status, or even his personal piety. Such love is merely an appreciation of that specific quality and is thus limited and proportionate to its cause. Instead the Rebbe taught that *Ahavas Yisrael* is love for the Jew's "essence," the spark of G-d that is equally present in every one of us. Only such love is truly unconditional.

It is this unconditional love that enables a person to reach past layers of personal shortcomings and quirks to tap into the core of another person.

And it is this personal love for every Jew that is conceivably at the core of the Rebbe's intense desire to share with each and every Jew their inheritance and essence – affording them the study of Torah and offering them the means to experience a Jewish way of life. 

LIKE A BEE

As a bee finds sweetness in every flower, the Rebbe unearthed the idea of Ahavas Yisrael in every subject of the Torah. Two examples:

1) The ritual of the Red Heifer contains a paradoxical law: the *kohen* (priest) who administers purification to the impure individual becomes impure himself. The lesson here, says the Rebbe, is that sometimes one must be willing to sacrifice one's own spiritual status in order to help cleanse another.

2) The last verse of the Torah itemizes Moses' praises. Surprisingly, the final praise, the very concluding words of the Torah, alludes to Moses' breaking the tablets at Mount Sinai – seemingly a very negative act!

The Rebbe explains that for all of Moses' qualities, this one was, in fact, his greatest.

Moses was the embodiment of Torah – it was his very being. Yet he was willing to break the Tablets – the "document" which was evidence of the covenant between G-d and His people – to save those who had violated it by worshipping a golden calf. By breaking the Tablets – which were his very essence – Moses demonstrated unconditional love and a willingness to sacrifice himself, even for the idol worshippers among the Jewish People.

For the Rebbe, *Ahavas Yisrael* is at the very core of the Torah itself. Thus, at every turn, every chapter, every word and every letter of the Torah bespeaks this underlying and all-pervasive truth.

THE MAN FROM AUSCHWITZ

As the three of us were waiting for a cab at 1:00 AM, on Seventh Avenue in Manhattan, one finally pulled over and the cab driver said, "Where to, ladies?"

While we were driving, the driver, a man with a heavy accent, asked us, "Are you Jewish?" Reluctantly, we responded, "Yes."

It was then that I noticed the name on his ID card: William Guttman.

Who was William Guttman, leisurely driving a cab through Manhattan on the night shift? Finally I asked him, as he had asked us, "Are you Jewish?"

"With a name like Guttman, what do you think?" The notion that we could have mistaken him for anything but a Jew seemed to stir up in him a distilled pride. "Where are you from?" I asked, figuring Russia, or perhaps Morocco.

"Auschwitz."

William Guttman was a survivor.

"My parents lived in Budapest. I was four years old when they took us. My mother worked in the *Frau Lager* (women's concentration camp), and then they put her in the gas chamber. My father died in the labor camp. I never really knew my parents. I don't even know if I have brothers or sisters."

"This is who I am," he continued in a matter-of-fact manner. "I went to an orphanage after the war, and the Red Cross brought me to America. I had no family when I came. I married an Israeli woman, but we were not religious. I don't wear a yarmulke, and I work seven days a week to help my son become a doctor. He finishes medical school in two months."

"You must be so proud of him."

"Yes. I'm not religious. But I have a lot of *mazel* (luck)."

I wondered, how does a Jew who survived Auschwitz think that he has *mazel*? He then asked us, "Are your parents Chasidim?"

The Chasidim of our families got lost somewhere between the *shtetl* and suburbia a long, long time ago. But, we told William Guttman that we were Lubavitchers.

We asked him if he had heard of Lubavitch.

"Lubavitch, I know it well. I have a *mazel'dike* dollar from the Rebbe. He's the best Rebbe in the whole world. I went to him, he gave me a dollar and told me that I'll have *mazel* and my son will have *hatzlocha* (success). Everything since then is good. Everything for me since I spoke to the Rebbe is good. I wouldn't give away my dollar, even if it was the last dollar I owned."

There was a deep sincerity, a power of conviction, in the broken English that he stammered.

"The Rebbe spoke to me in Hungarian," he claimed. "He was from Hungary, did you know?"

I was going to correct him and then thought better of it. The Rebbe was from Hungary to a Hungarian Jew. And from Brazil. And from Hong Kong. And from wherever the Jew whose eyes he looked into was from.

And again he repeated, "I'm not religious. And my wife is not religious," he continued. "But when the Rebbe was in the hospital, she called there every day to see how he was doing. When he passed away, we cried for three days."

"He is like a father to us. . . ."

Jewish Unity

“For the Rebbe, Jewish unity is not a slogan, a wish or a promise; it is a reality.”

—Yisrael Meir Lau, Chief Rabbi of Israel

A Simple Agenda – Jewish Unity

T*o the Rebbe, all Jews comprise a single whole – a single body as real as a human one.*

Children are an inextricable extension of their parents, regardless of whether they are wise or simple, old or young, righteous or wicked. Even when they deny their parents, the essential connection remains between them. Similarly, all Jews are one because their essence, their soul, which is a part of G-d – is identical and one.

But even as separate and unique individuals all Jews are also interconnected – like a human body composed of many different parts. Only when all the parts are connected is the body whole. Each individual Jew constitutes a unique part of the Jewish whole, without which, G-d forbid, the entire People is incomplete.

Taking the analogy of the body further, not only is every Jew vital to the Jewish people to constitute one whole but, furthermore, each individual Jew contributes something that is unachievable by any other person besides him or her. The head, for example, lacks the mobility that the foot has. In this respect the foot is superior even to the head and

contributes to it by carrying the head and the entire body to places it could not go on its own!

Similarly, every Jew has certain unique qualities that help comprise the totality of the Jewish People, and help propel ▶

JEWISH OUTREACH


Why would you ask someone to put on tefillin or light Shabbat candles – someone you have never met before and may likely never see again? And what is the point of encouraging these isolated, seemingly incongruous acts?

A disciple of the Rebbe – a Chasid – offers *tefillin* and Shabbat candles to a stranger for the simple reason that tefillin and Shabbat candles belong to every single Jew. It is offered because of who that person already is, not because he or she may one day become “Orthodox.” It is the person’s right to perform the mitzvah, and it is our privilege to help him or her with the same fervor and compassion with which we provide a stranger in need with a warm meal and a place to sleep.



the rest of the global Jewish body to ever greater heights in the service of G-d.

Recognizing this unity helps intensify one's *Ahavas Yisrael* and requires each of us to reach out and ensure that all Jews, every Jew, find his and her place and utilizes their potential, both for their own sake and for that of the entire Jewish people.

The Rebbe sought to connect every Jew in the world through the boldest spiritual initiative ever undertaken. For the Rebbe, Jewish unity was not a slogan – it was reality. 

600,000 LETTERS IN THE TORAH

The word “*Yisroel*” is an acronym for “*Yesh shishim ribui osios latorah* – there are six hundred thousand letters in the Torah.” 600,000 constitutes the totality of the Jewish People when they became a nation upon leaving Egypt.

If even a single letter in a Torah scroll is damaged, the entire scroll is rendered invalid for use, until the letter is repaired. Similarly, if one Jew is in some way lacking, that void affects the entire Jewish people.

NO JEWISH BACKGROUND?

A prominent businessman and longtime supporter of Chabad started a beginners' service at his congregation. He proudly reported on his initiative to the Rebbe. “But when I told the Rebbe that I had arranged services for 130 Jews with no Jewish background,” the businessman related, “the Rebbe’s smile vanished. He looked at me with those piercing blue eyes and I knew I must have said something wrong. ‘What?’ the Rebbe said, giving me a chance to repeat myself, which I did. ‘No Jewish background?’ asked the Rebbe. He looked at me as if I had insulted his children.”

‘Go back and tell them that they have a background. They are the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah.’ The Rebbe’s smile then returned, and he gave me a blessing.”



Torah Study

“...He continually drives together the highest abstract truth and the most specific call to action, spanning the continuum of the whole of Jewish study.”

—Dr. Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the UK

Torah... a Sentence, a Word, a Letter

Torah, the Rebbe would often state, is derived from the word “hora’ah” – lesson. He made this a fundamental principle in his approach to Torah – that Torah is a blueprint for life and every letter and nuance is a lesson to guide a Jew’s life.

The Rebbe’s study of Torah was permeated with a deep respect for the “Giver of the Torah.” Hence, his sensitivity toward each letter, let alone a word or sentence, in the Torah, the Talmud, and the commentaries.

A TORAH OF LIFE

The Rebbe repeatedly emphasized that Torah is a *Toras Chaim*, a “Torah of Life,” permeating every area of life.

Its every aspect – from the loftiest concepts in Kabbalah to a Midrashic aphorism to Rashi’s grammatical notes – has practical lessons in a person’s daily life. The Rebbe would often expound on seemingly minor details of a Torah passage and demonstrate their relevance and lessons for this very day.

Additionally, every aspect of the myriad mundane issues with which we are confronted daily – all are illuminated, informed and directed by the Torah.

G-d vested His infinite wisdom inside the Torah, the blueprint of the world, to direct even the simple material aspects of life. We need to probe the Torah’s depths to find that direction.

The Rebbe was known to take a pragmatic view of the natural world. He directed people to consult doctors, seek expert advice, and ask caring friends for their opinions. He believed in being proactive and would measure success on the basis of results. ▶

TO LIVE WITH THE TIMES

The Rebbe would frequently repeat the statement of the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of the Chabad movement, that “one must live with the times” (*mehn darf lebbin mit der tzeit*) – with the content of the week’s Torah reading. Because the Torah is “*Toras Chaim*,” a “Torah of Life,” the weekly Torah portion is meant to be a guide, providing life lessons for that particular time.



However, this practical approach, too, emanated from the depths of the Rebbe's extraordinary appreciation of the Torah. Because Torah, the very wisdom and manual of the world's Creator, says that these practical remedial means are useful – this empowers them to become useful. In His Torah G-d tells us that one is to be healed through a doctor. These very words give the physician the ability to cure; the doctor is the medium through which G-d chooses to grant healing.

So not only is Torah a guide to life, the Rebbe saw the Torah as *affecting* physical and material existence, empowering or altering the course of even the most mundane matters.

A TORAH OF TRUTH

The Rebbe would often cite the biblical descriptions of the Torah, *Torah Acha*, "One Torah," and *Toras Emes*, the "Torah of Truth."

Though the Torah is divided into the Written Law (Bible), and the Oral Law (Midrash, Talmud, Halachah, Kabbalah, etc.), in truth they are one.


FOR REAL

The Rebbe launched his now ubiquitous Tefillin campaign at the onset of the Six Day War, as Israel's surrounding neighbors threatened to destroy her.

In doing so, he cited the Talmud, which interprets the Biblical verse, "All the nations of the land will see that the Name of G-d is called upon you and they will fear you," as referring to *Tefillin*. The *Tefillin* campaign was a means to win the war. *Tefillin*, said the Rebbe, is the tool, or channel, through which G-d bestows His blessings. Furthermore, since all of the Jewish people are like one body with many parts and organs, when a Jew on one end of the world puts on *Tefillin*, he affects the people defending lives on the opposite end.

When asked for advice and blessing, the Rebbe would often instruct to check one's *Tefillin* and *Mezuzos* to ensure that they are kosher, or take upon oneself to be more meticulous in other specific *mitzvos* in order to elicit G-d's blessing in all matters of life.

With clarity, ingenuity and compelling logic, the Rebbe synthesized all these and more.

Truth is the same everywhere. The Rebbe showed how the teachings of seemingly disparate disciplines in Torah are all expressions of one wisdom, manifested on various levels – and the esoteric wisdom that determines a Divine emanation in higher realms is in fact the very same wisdom that informs the practical teaching given to each of us. 

“The Rebbe took the Torah and brought it down to earth for us; he taught us how to incorporate it within ourselves... to combine a life of Yiddishkeit with a life of full involvement in the broader community.”

—U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman

One World, One Direction, One Master of the Universe

The breadth and depth of the Rebbe’s worldly knowledge included many disciplines: engineering, history, medicine, technology, chemistry, law, literature, politics, and at least nine languages.

The Rebbe was well-versed in all of these fields and more.

He harnessed this vast knowledge to his rare ability to communicate with and connect to people of all levels and backgrounds.

The Rebbe viewed the world’s diverse components as part of a single whole – a whole that is vastly greater than the sum of its parts. There is no fragmentation. The function of every element affects the entirety.

This is both a practical truth as well as a philosophical one.

The world and its inhabitants were designed

to be one, created and continually sustained by the one G-d. And because it is intrinsically one, the world should be treated accordingly.

Thus, it behooves humanity and its governments to be acutely conscious of their conduct, for their effect is felt globally. They must strive for an awareness that true oneness is achieved only by serving the one G-d.

A Dwelling for G-d

Created by G-d, the world is innately good.

The world is intended as a place that acknowledges and is receptive to G-d, “where G-d feels comfortable.”

However, there are times when G-d intentionally conceals the good in order to create challenges. Through their behavior, humans can mine the depths of the divine concealment and reveal the good concealed within. ▶



This “internalization through challenge” is the ultimate beneficial good for mankind.

Accordingly, we should not reject or strive to escape the physical and material world. Rather, we are to transform it into a *dirah b'tachtonim*, a “dwelling place” for G-d, in which His presence affects every

human behavior and, through man, every object and aspect of existence.

Furthermore, the Rebbe taught, the world can and should express the Divine *through its own resources*.

While our submission to G-d's will can profoundly affect the world around us, a true dirah b'tachtonim can only be achieved when the world – in all of its “worldliness” and on its own terms – expresses and facilitates the revelation of the Divine.

Hence, when newly-observant Jews expressed interest in abandoning their careers – in the arts, sciences or technology – in order to devote their full energies to Torah, the Rebbe, almost without exception, insisted that they remain in their professions. He pointed out that their contribution to perfecting the world was to be through the particular skills and position that their G-d-orchestrated path had led them to acquire. ▶

THE SCIENCE OF UNITY

In a letter to a scientist, the Rebbe writes: At the core of material existence, science has found a oneness of two opposite ideas: Quantity and quality... In simple language, matter and energy are one. Why? Because G-d is one, therefore the world is one.

In earlier generations, the study of nature yielded a picture of a multifarious universe. The world was perceived as being comprised of dozens of elements and driven by a number of distinct forces.

But the more science developed, the more it uncovered the unity behind the diversity. One hundred “elements” were revealed to be composed of a much smaller number of fundamental building blocks; diverse forces were shown to be but variant mutations of a single, elementary force.

Even the differentiation between matter and energy was shown to be but an external distinction between two forms of the same essence. Indeed, science is rapidly approaching the inevitable conclusion that the entirety of existence is a singular ray emanating from a singular source.



*Likewise, the Rebbe encouraged people to utilize technological innovation like radio, television and the Internet, to spread knowledge, awareness and understanding of G-d. Not only can these things be utilized for holiness, the Rebbe explained, but this is their very *raison d'être*.*

The Rebbe also harnessed social currents and cultural phenomena to advance Jewish awareness. During the cultural revolution of the '60s, for example, the Rebbe saw an opportunity to channel the rebellion of the youth toward a reexamination of the Judaism that their parents had rejected.

Even within Torah study, prayer and one's inner service of G-d, the Rebbe emphasized the need for utilizing and elevating every dimension of a person's character. For example, he spoke about the need to utilize the nature of both the simple and sophisticated servant in the service of G-d. Each possesses a special quality lacking in the other; each approach is, therefore, necessary for

the fulfillment of *dirah b'tachtonim*. For G-dliness must permeate every aspect of the human expression and experience.

The Good in Everything

Because the world is one cohesive whole, because every occurrence is purposeful and meaningful, because all stems from the One G-d Who is the ultimate goodness, *every experience, even the most challenging and adverse, must contain or engender something positive.* ▶

A BASEBALL LESSON


Once, during his years working with his father-in-law, the previous Rebbe, the Rebbe visited the yeshiva down the corridor from his office at Lubavitch World Headquarters. He noticed a student entering the study hall in the middle of a session and asked him where he was coming from. The student cheerfully admitted that he had taken time out from his studies to attend a baseball game. He had left the game early because his team was down by a wide margin. "Did you learn anything at the game?" the Rebbe asked him. The student shrugged with a smile. The Rebbe continued, "In baseball, there are two teams, each with nine players – and there are the thousands of fans who sit in the crowd. As long as their team is ahead, the fans cheer. But as soon as their team falls behind, the fans are let down and, eventually, when they see that their team has no chance of winning, they even leave. The players, however, all stay to the end, no matter what. That's the difference between a fan and a player."



With incredible faith and an infectiously positive approach, the Rebbe would find a point of consolation within even the most adverse human experience. While sharing deeply in the pain of others, the Rebbe found words of encouragement for victims of great catastrophe. He would urge and support them to forge forward with a positive approach to life, and to meet the challenge head on – to turn the negative into a catalyst for something positive.

After his wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, of blessed memory, passed away, the

Rebbe's sorrow was palpable, yet he called for an increase in communal activities. "And the living shall take to heart," became his motto. He turned the passing of a loved one into a catalyst for acts of goodness – acts which are surely the desire of the deceased, who has passed on to the World of Truth.

The Rebbe's unified view of the world challenges us to appreciate that everything – including that which seems negative – is not merely a "necessary evil" to achieve ultimate good, but is in its very essence something good. 

ON TECHNOLOGY

The Sages pronounced, "Everything that G-d created in His world was created solely for His glory." Thus, a Jew cannot divide the world into sacred and profane. Everything has been created for a sacred purpose. Our challenge is to determine exactly how each thing is to be applied toward the fulfillment of its true purpose. For example, when the medium of radio is used to broadcast a lecture on Chasidus, then this invention has reached its purpose in preparing the world for the Messianic Age.

For the Messianic Age is distinguished primarily by two characteristics. The world will "be full of the knowledge of the L-rd," and this knowledge will be "seen by all flesh." This is precisely what happens when radio and television are used to broadcast Chasidus. The Chasidus learned thereby is heard physically, and in every part of the world, for a transmission can be heard or seen everywhere if only the receiver is powerful enough. Thus, the esoteric teachings of the Torah, through the use of modern technology, are indeed "filling the earth with the knowledge of the L-rd," in such manner that "all flesh will perceive it."

Complete Selflessness

“In my capacity as Prime Minister, everyone I met wanted something of me. The Rebbe gave to me.”

—Menachem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel


A Mindset of Complete Selflessness

It is a cardinal principle of Judaism that a Jew must be prepared for *mesiras nefesh*, to sacrifice everything for the sake of his Jewishness.

The Rebbe taught, however, that in a deeper sense the ultimate *mesiras nefesh* is not just readiness to give up one’s life for the sake of G-d. True self-sacrifice means to adopt a mindset and feeling of complete selflessness: *to recognize one’s entire existence as being solely for the purpose that G-d’s will be fulfilled.*

From this perspective, there is no difference between what appears to be a more prestigious role in the service of G-d and a menial, seemingly lesser, function – they both bring about the fulfillment of G-d’s desire. The Rebbe quoted the adage of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, “If we were commanded to chop wood that, too, would be our holy obligation and Divine service.”

For the Rebbe, this was a way of life – one he shared with us as well. He emphasized that when we study Torah and perform *mitzvos*, we need to bear in mind that we do so in order to fulfill the Almighty’s will – to make this world a suitable abode for G-d. We are but conduits for G-d’s will to be fulfilled.

Despite the loftiness of this idea, the Rebbe – by personal example – inspired and empowered his *Shluchim* (emissaries) and so many others to transcend their own selves through cultivating genuine disregard for material or even spiritual self-benefit. 

ABRAHAM’S SELF-SACRIFICE

Out of his boundless love for G-d, Rabbi Akiva waited all his life for the opportunity to forfeit his life in order to sanctify G-d’s name. He expressed joy as the Romans ruthlessly tortured him to death.

By contrast, Abraham did not seek to express his love for G-d by sacrificing his life. Abraham’s goal was that G-d’s will should be fulfilled. He did not seek martyrdom. If it would require self-sacrifice to serve G-d’s will, so be it. But he did not actively seek martyrdom.

– Bosi L’gani 5711 (1950), the Rebbe’s first discourse



TRUE SELFLESSNESS

"...The true servant of G-d is so anxious to fulfill his mission every day and every minute that he is oblivious to the spiritual state of his mind and heart, and certainly to the subconscious of his soul. So when you ask him, 'What is the spiritual condition that you desire?' he cries out bitterly, 'What desire? What delight? What love? What awe? I have been given a certain amount of days and I must stand guard that not one moment should go wasted ... how can I stop and think about my own spiritual achievements?' He is so anxious about and immersed in fulfilling his mission that he does not think at all about his own spiritual status...."

- *Lo Sihiyeh Mishakela 5712 (1952) a discourse by the Rebbe*

In a rare letter written in 1949, the Rebbe writes: *"I must emphasize that despite the aforementioned [urging you to be active in communal affairs], it remains now, just as it was when we met in person, that I myself take no pleasure in being involved with communal affairs...."*

"DOLLARS"

Throughout the years of his leadership, the Rebbe demonstrated total disregard for his own physical and spiritual needs. As time went on he displayed increasingly greater levels of utter self-sacrifice.

Neither colds, chronic coughing, nor a massive heart attack in 1977 could preempt the Rebbe's activity of farbrengens (marathon Chasidic gatherings), correspondence, and receiving visitors.

Rather than withdrawing as he advanced in age, the Rebbe initiated and undertook activities that were ever more physically and emotionally challenging.

In 1981, the Rebbe launched the Jewish children's organization, *Tzivos Hashem*, and initiated numerous children's programs. *He personally edited some parts of the new organization's magazine, and often spoke to the children, and attended their rallies and parades.*

In 1986, the Rebbe began "giving dollars" – allocating precious time to tend to all types of people, in a simple and basic way. At least once a week, *he would stand for hours on end, as thousands of men, women and children of all backgrounds filed past him to receive a blessing and a dollar to give to charity.* Many of the visitors would seek his advice, on myriad issues, and the Rebbe would give each one his full attention.

Simplicity, and Sensitivity

"At age sixteen, I had a private audience with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. It impacted me for life. In my entire life he was the only one who listened to me."

—A University of Wisconsin graduate student

Model of Simplicity, Role Model of Sensitivity

The Rebbe's personal lifestyle was a model of simplicity. He lived in a modestly furnished home and had virtually no material possessions.

Though he was constantly in the public eye, few people knew anything of the Rebbe's private life. He rarely spoke about himself, his inner feelings or his experiences.

From his deportment one could intuit little about his inner joy, pain or agony. However, the Rebbe's consummate modesty was matched by his sensitivity, and there were occasions when the Rebbe did not contain himself.

He shed tears publicly when recalling his own Rebbe – his saintly father-in-law, while talking about the pain and sacrifice of Russian Jews, when discussing G-d's love even for idolaters, or while speaking of a single soldier killed on Israel's front lines.

Yet, the Rebbe would immediately continue his talk at the *farbrengen* and

encourage lively song and dance, as if he had not just undergone a personally moving experience.

The Rebbe's sensitivity to all who met him is well-known.

Until his heart attack in 1978, the Rebbe received people for private audiences well into the night, two or three nights a week. (He continued this practice on a different scale even afterward, until 1982, at which point the sheer volume of people seeking the Rebbe's counsel was mathematically impossible to accommodate. A few years later the Rebbe began his practice of seeing people each Sunday while distributing dollars for charity.) People would often have to wait for weeks to have a private audience with the Rebbe, yet no one was screened for their intended questions and everyone was eventually accommodated.

Relating to each person with devotion and humility, the Rebbe accepted and listened to each individual with total attentiveness. In the Rebbe's presence, ▶



visitors of all backgrounds and ages felt as if they were his only concern, as if nothing and no one else existed at that moment.

The Rebbe was also noted for remembering people he had met only once, decades before, and for recalling all the details of these meetings.

Reverence for G-d

With the discovery in 1994 of the Rebbe's *reshimos* (his personal notations on a wide range of subjects), we were afforded a rare insight into his private thoughts. Reading these journals, ▶

To an individual offering a gift of a silver wine decanter, the Rebbe writes: *"I certainly appreciate the good intention and desire. But for practical considerations, I must take the thought for the deed. For, as a matter of principle and practice over the past 30-odd years, I prefer to use a "bagged" glass container that conceals its contents, though I have, thank G-d, silver vessels. Similarly, I do not use a silver Esrog box... one reason... is that I do not wish to make a distinction between me and those surrounding me."*

SENSITIVITY, TRUTH, LOVE AND WIT

It is Sunday. The line of people waiting to see the Rebbe is very long. After hours, I finally find myself face to face with the Rebbe. At first, I just see the Rebbe's penetrating eyes. Everything I had prepared to say escapes me. Finally I say, "I have a problem... I have begun to become more observant, but I am involved in an inappropriate relationship..."

I have anticipated the response. *The Rebbe will likely become upset and tell me what a terrible sin I am committing.* He would speak of Heaven and Hell ... But the response I get is completely different. The Rebbe's face is very serious, yet I think I detect a hint of a smile on his lips.

"I envy you," the Rebbe says.

At first I don't grasp what the Rebbe just said. The Rebbe, the pious Jew, the revered rabbi and Torah-genius, world-renowned Jewish leader, envies me?!

The Rebbe continues, "In life there are many 'ladders.' Each person has his or her own 'ladder' to climb. I was never faced with the challenge that you are. G-d has given you a choice, a ladder, the top of which reaches the Heavens. This test is the challenge which will raise you to the greatest of heights."

I don't remember what happened afterwards. Several minutes later, I find myself in the synagogue, sobbing like a baby. Someone approaches me and asks if he could get me some water, and before I have a chance to respond, a glass of water is handed to me....

one is struck throughout by his complete sensitivity, submission and reverence before G-d. The Rebbe's sense of inner servitude to the Almighty was manifest even while he was immersed in the most complex subjects in Talmud, Jewish law, or Kabbalah.

The Smallest Deed is Infinite, the Greatest Insufficient

Remarkably, the Rebbe would ascribe great importance to even the smallest activity on behalf of Torah and *mitzvos* and general goodness. He would vigorously encourage each of them.


Yet, when informed of great accomplishments the Rebbe would often challenge those involved not to be satisfied.

To the Rebbe, even the smallest deed reflected and expressed the depth



of the Jewish soul and the Divine infinity contained within a *mitzvah*. Yet even the greatest accomplishment cannot fully contain the full, immeasurable greatness of G-dliness.

In the Rebbe's world, not a single individual is excluded, not a moment is to be wasted, the call is for now and the call is to all. *No task is too vast and no cost is too great to share with all Jews that which is their birthright – our heritage.*

Indeed, the Rebbe would often cite the words of Maimonides, that "one should always view the world as if the scales of judgment are precisely balanced." One's very next act, however small, has the power to tilt the scales, "bringing salvation to the entire world." 

MY CHARGE – TO "LIFT UP"

A Chasid, who lived in the Rebbe's neighborhood in Crown Heights, once received a midnight call from an acquaintance in Oklahoma regarding an urgent business matter. The caller sought the Rebbe's counsel and blessing.

The Chasid rushed to the Lubavitch World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, hoping to relay the matter to the Rebbe's personal secretary, Rabbi Hodakov, who would bring the matter to the Rebbe, before leaving the office for home.

Upon reaching "770," the Chasid learned that Rabbi Hodakov was already inside the Rebbe's study. He decided then to write a note describing the urgent matter and insert

it in the crack of the door of the Rebbe's office, hoping that Rabbi Hodakov would notice the note and forward it to the Rebbe.

Standing in the waiting room of the Rebbe's office, the Chasid was disappointed to see Rabbi Hodakov exit the Rebbe's office without noticing the note, which had fallen to the floor as the door was opened. It was the Rebbe himself who walked over to the door, bent down, and picked up the letter.

The next day, the Chasid wrote to the Rebbe apologizing for inconveniencing him by causing him to have to retrieve the note from the floor.

The Rebbe replied, *"Is this not my charge to 'lift up,' especially those whom others overlook?!"*



PRISONERS' VISIT

A Chabad *Shliach*, who served as a prison chaplain, once organized a spiritual retreat to Crown Heights for a group of Jewish inmates. The highlight of their stay would be attending the Rebbe's *farbrengen*. Before the gathering began, the *Shliach* received a message from the Rebbe's secretariat: "The Rebbe does not want the prisoners to sit together. They should be interspersed throughout the crowd." The emissary, who had gone to great lengths to arrange that the group should have a place to sit at the standing room only *farbrengen*, was puzzled by the request. One of the secretaries then explained, "The Rebbe feels that if your group were to be seated together, they will attract attention. People will ask who they are, and it will be known that they are prisoners, causing them embarrassment. To prevent this from happening, they should be seated throughout the crowd."

WHAT'S WITH THE GIRL IN BOWIE, MARYLAND?

A well-known activist in the Rebbe's Shabbat Candles campaign, relates the following story.

"Twenty minutes before Shabbat, I received a phone call from the Rebbe's secretariat saying that the Rebbe had read a letter from the father of a little girl in Bowie, Maryland who wanted his daughter to start lighting Shabbat candles. The Rebbe requested that I be contacted and see to it that the girl light candles this Shabbat!

"I immediately called the *Shliach* in the town nearest the girl, hoping that he could rush candles to her in time, but he told me that there would be no way for him to reach the girl's home before sunset. I then called the girl's home and spoke to her mother. I asked if she had any candles in the house. She answered that, indeed, she had candles that she used for formal dinner parties. I asked her to give a candle to her daughter to light for Shabbat. I then asked the mother if she, too, would light. She said that she had no objections, but that she had no idea how to do it. If I could instruct her over the phone, then she and her daughter would both light candles together, which they did.

"The following Friday afternoon, close to candle lighting time, I received another call from the Rebbe's secretariat. "The Rebbe wants to know, 'What's with the girl in Bowie, Maryland?'" I was glad to report that the girl and her mother had both lit candles; and, as a matter of fact, during the week, I had even sent them several more candles for the girl's classmates and the mother's friends to light."



“He was a leader of the entire generation. He established the direction for all, whether they know it or not. He set the agenda and defined the priorities for Klal Yisrael – the entire Jewish community.”

—Rabbi Adin Even Yisrael (Steinsaltz)

Stirring the Conscience of World Jewry

With deep spiritual passion and keen vision, the Rebbe stirred the conscience of world Jewry.


Undeterred by the shock of the Holocaust, defying the grim prognosis for Jewish survival in the modern age, the Rebbe launched a sweeping effort to foster Torah and Judaism in all corners of the globe.

Decades before the Jewish community realized the need to do so the Rebbe called upon rabbis, Jewish leaders, teachers and individuals of all stripes, to reach out to the youth and the unaffiliated. By the time the Jewish community came to grips with the true dangers of our times, the Rebbe had long since set the agenda and had innovated the methodology for conducting broad-based outreach.

Today’s buzzwords—“Jewish renaissance,” “continuity,” “education,” “outreach” and “mitzvah experiences” – have been part of the Rebbe’s program for decades.

Indeed, his innovations are so ingrained in Jewish life they are taken for granted and not identified as Lubavitch in origin.

The Rebbe inspired the entire palate of Jewish activism to reach out and embrace unaffiliated Jews and offer them an appreciation for the beauty of Torah and their heritage. Now, virtually every segment of the established Jewish community has adopted his call of reaching out to those not yet learned in Torah. After fifty years, the entire spectrum of the Jewish community recognizes the truth and urgent necessity of this call.

In a century that saw two World Wars, the rise and fall of Communism, mass emigration of the Jewish people to America, the establishment of the State of Israel, the space age, the computer age, and an information revolution, the Rebbe’s vision remained steady and constant. 



FRONT PAGE OF THE TIMES

Chasidic tradition, originating from the Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chasidic movement, says that *Moshiach* (Messiah) will come when the wellsprings of Chasidism will overflow and spread to “the outside.” When the Rebbe first came to America in the early 1940s, he hypothesized, “the announcement of a new class in *Chasidism* will make headlines in *The New York Times*” as an illustration of this concept.

At the time the Rebbe said this, the murder of millions of Jews barely made it to the back pages of *The Times*. It was a time when traditional Judaism, let alone Chasidism, did not seem to have any future in America.

Sixty years later, no one is amazed when *Moshiach* makes the front page of the *The Wall Street Journal*; when books of Chasidic teachings are reviewed in major newspapers; and when *The New York Times*, in its bicentennial edition, publishes an imaginary front page for the January 1, 2100 issue that includes an announcement of the Shabbat candle lighting on that day, a Friday, 100 years hence.

Defying “reality” and the toll of the Holocaust, the Rebbe envisioned the ultimate fulfillment of a world that accommodates and serves the purpose for which it was created. For him, it was right before his eyes.

Leadership

“He feels what everyone here feels. He helps all attain the unattainable. In his presence, one feels more Jewish, more authentically Jewish. Seen by him, one comes in closer contact with one’s own inner Jewish center.”

—Elie Wiesel

Chasing a Single Lost Sheep

The Rebbe was a global leader whose towering personality, innovative methods, organizational skills and vision impacted the entire world. At the same time, to hundreds of thousands who came in direct contact with him, he was their personal Rebbe.

The pain of every individual was his pain, and the joys of every individual were his joy. No one was dispensable. Everyone belonged and everyone counted.

On numerous occasions the Rebbe cited the Midrashic narratives about Moses, who with loving tenderness fed the right type of grass to each type of sheep and chased a single lost sheep in order to return it to the flock.

This, the Midrash says, is why Moses was chosen to be the shepherd of the Jewish people.

Extracting Hidden Powers

In similar fashion, the Rebbe recognized the value and particular qualities of each individual. He would tap directly into the very core of a person’s being and

activate hidden reservoirs of energy. He encouraged all to go beyond themselves, beyond their current mindset and personal limitations – to grow and expand in their service of G-d in every direction.

Furthermore, the Rebbe urged everyone – even a young child – to have a positive effect also on his or her sphere of influence, to serve as a catalyst to elevate the spiritual and material condition of anyone else with whom he or she came in contact.

The Rebbe encouraged and motivated each person to fully utilize their unique talents and personality. This was especially manifest in the trust he vested in his *Shluchim*. The Rebbe gave them the freedom to design programs in their respective communities that were consistent with their individual natures and matched with the community’s needs.

The Rebbe empowered ordinary individuals to accomplish extraordinary things. He mined dormant talents, ▶



energies and powers to uplift countless communities – to change the world, to share and transmit the message of hope and goodness everywhere.

Rather than merely attracting followers, the Rebbe created leaders.

He crafted a unique brand of *Shluchim*, emissaries, transforming them from ordinary citizens concerned with their private lives, into “big people” – visionaries and leaders, concerned primarily with the welfare of others. The Rebbe inspired generations of *Shluchim* to leave everything in order to make a lifelong commitment to their new communities. ▶

TAKE THE HIGH ROAD

The Rebbe would often relate a statement by the Fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shmuel (the Rebbe “Maharash”), “*Lechatchilah Aribel!*” – One’s approach in the service of G-d should be to “take the high road.” This attitude became one of the Rebbe’s hallmarks. When embarking on a campaign or responding to a need – rather than focusing on the odds, the Rebbe zeroed in on the need and the solution, confident that conditions would ultimately fall into place.

Rather than taking the route of surveys, meetings, and studies, the Rebbe, with minimal resources, launched innovative campaigns, created institutions and programs, and inspired others to follow suit. Armed with love, a positive attitude and the determination to help every Jew, his *Shluchim* set out for communities across the world. Eventually they won the admiration and support of all, even their adversaries.

Similarly, the Rebbe encouraged Chasidim to approach Jews everywhere, even in business or on the street, offering to put on *Tefillin* and perform other *mitzvos*, without regard for standard etiquette or fears of being rejected.

And in the same spirit, the Rebbe instructed Chasidim to share the “best” in Judaism, even with those who do not yet observe even the minimum – hence, for example, the *Shmurah Matzah* campaign which ultimately also helped promote basic *Pesach* observance.

THE CRY OF A CHILD

The Rebbe related the following story: The second Rebbe of the Chabad dynasty, Rabbi Dov Ber – following his marriage – lived in the house of his father, Rabbi Schneur Zalman. Once, Rabbi Dov Ber's infant child fell out of a crib in the other room and was crying. Rabbi Dov Ber, who was known for his ability to focus intensely for hours on Torah subjects, was so engrossed in his thoughts that he did not hear the baby crying. Rabbi Schneur Zalman came downstairs and picked up his grandson. He later rebuked his son: "No matter how deeply one is engrossed in Chasidus, one must never be oblivious to the cry of a child."

The Rebbe insisted that we must never be so involved with our own affairs, lofty as they may be, that we are unable to pay heed to the inner cry of others to return to their spiritual roots.

Not only did the Rebbe pay attention to the general outcry of the Jewish community, he was attuned to their particular inner cries as well. The Rebbe took seriously every segment of the community, tending to their needs with sincerity and truth, on their level and in the way that they expressed their outcry:

WOMEN

In 1942, long before women's rights made its way into world consciousness and the Jewish agenda, the Rebbe established N'shei Chabad, the Chabad Women's Organization, as an independent group, rather than merely an auxiliary. In his pre-holiday letters to world Jewry, the Rebbe would always address himself to "the Sons and Daughters of Israel." At every major farbrengen the Rebbe would devote one of his talks specifically to women. Several times a year, he would meet and talk exclusively to women.

In his talks, the Rebbe emphasized the special quality, merit and responsibility accorded to women. Among other things, the Rebbe was the first rabbinic leader to publicly tackle the problem and needs of battered women. The Rebbe also encouraged serious academic learning of Torah and Chasidus among women.

CHILDREN

Education generally, and the education of children in particular, is a theme that is a constant in the Rebbe's talks and writings. Information imparted to children, the Rebbe emphasized, must contain the entire truth and the same depth provided to adults.

A child's question, the Rebbe said, ***should not be given an untrue or watered-down response.*** Not only because the answer will affect him for the rest of his life, but because children must be taken seriously as human beings who deserve the proper "nourishment," albeit in a matter that they can digest.



The Rebbe imparted to others something of his own sense of freedom – the freedom to transcend one’s own needs and limited perspective of Judaism.

By Example

The Rebbe himself was the consummate *yerei shamayim* (G-d-fearing person), the ultimate man of *Halachah* (Jewish law), who fulfilled *mitzvos* in the most meticulous and scrupulous fashion. Yet, he accepted and went out of his way to meet people whose conduct, deportment

and persuasion contrasted sharply with his own. He treated them with respect, love and affection. He would find a good word for them, shower them with blessings, and help them in any way that he could.

While for the Rebbe, Mitzvah observances and the Torah way of life were an absolute, he related to each person in accordance with the individual’s own situation and observance level. Mindful of the person’s needs, he would encourage Jewish growth in a way that emphasized the benefits of coming closer to Torah’s way.

The Rebbe imparted this spirit to his *Shluchim*, to his Chasidim and to many beyond Chabad circles.

As a leader who dared to march into *terra incognita*, the Rebbe dispatched his *Shluchim* to far-flung places that lacked a community and an environment conducive to a life of Torah – not to mention a Chasidic way of life – for themselves and their children. ▶

“At the time when the Rebbe sent my husband and me as emissaries, my husband could not speak English and I was too bashful to even call directory assistance for a phone number. If I were in charge, I would never have allowed me to represent me. And yet the Rebbe entrusted us with this enormous responsibility and empowered us to represent him.”

—From a shlucha sent by the Rebbe in the 1960’s.

Even three decades into his leadership, the Rebbe still stood practically alone in this far-flung outreach work while others remained on the sidelines for fear of spiritually endangering the impressionable young people necessary to carry out this effort.

Only a leader like the Rebbe had the spiritual resources to enable his *Shluchim* to withstand all challenges, to stand tall and strong in their personal lives, and to exert healthy influence on, rather than be influenced by, the communities

in which they lived. They prepared the grounds for everyone to follow suit.

Everyone's Rebbe

The Rebbe was not only the Rebbe of Lubavitcher Chasidim; he was everyone's Rebbe.

He encouraged rabbis and lay people, institutions and programs that were far outside the Lubavitch framework to play their special role in impacting their communities and beyond. ▶

RAYA MEHEMNA – “THE SHEPHERD OF FAITH”

The Midrash describes *Moshe Rabbeinu* (Moses) as a *Raya Mehemna*, “a Faithful Shepherd” – or, in accordance with Chasidic interpretation, “a Shepherd of Faith.” Similarly, other leaders of the Jewish people throughout the ages were described in this manner.

In private meetings, in correspondence, and in public talks, the Rebbe nurtured his audience with pure faith, earnestness, and undaunted devotion. ***In the face of great universal challenges – the Holocaust, world cynicism, scientific discoveries – or the harsh reality of individual hardships, the Rebbe imparted earnestness and purity of faith in a way that permeated the individual's life.***

This is evident in the spirit of dedication that the Rebbe imparted to his Chasidim, his *Shluchim* and their children born and raised in remote communities. Looking at them, one marvels at their faith and steadfast Chasidic way of life. So, too, ***even under the harshest oppression under brutal Communist regimes, Chasidim survived and flourished.*** Their faith permeated their entire beings, as they internalized the Rebbe's teachings.

Throughout the ages, great Jewish leaders have inspired their people to summon their potential for self-sacrifice in the face of persecution, poverty, and discrimination. ***The Rebbe, however, aroused a sense of self-sacrifice even among Jews who enjoyed unprecedented freedom. He empowered them to withstand, not the test of poverty, but the test of affluence and comfort.*** As the Rebbe pointed out in his last edited discourse, this test is, in a way, a greater challenge, requiring an even deeper sense of commitment stemming from the very essence of the soul.

Furthermore, like none other, the Rebbe impressed upon all those with whom he came in contact, that Torah and *mitzvos* are effective not only on a spiritual level, but that they are vehicles for G-d's blessings in the reality of this world, showing that the observance of Torah and *mitzvos* is synonymous with success in one's physical and material life.



the Rebbe paid attention to and cared for the improvement of all humanity as a whole: its quality of life in general and its moral life in particular.

While the Jewish people have a distinct way of life and are a unique nation to whom the Torah was given with a specific mandate, the Torah also contains instruction for all of humanity – known as the *Seven Noahide Laws*.

From the Rebbe's broad Torah perspective and world view – as detailed in the Prophets, Scriptures, Talmud, and Jewish philosophy – the entire world is here for and will ultimately come to serve the one G-d – and we are responsible to help see to it that this comes to fruition.

It is part of the mission of the Jewish people to be “*ohr la'goyim*” – a light unto the nations. And it is a Jewish obligation to help influence non-Jews to follow G-d's commandments in the *Seven Noahide Laws* for a moral, just and civil world. ▶

Rather than seeking a monopoly on innovation, from the very outset the Rebbe called upon all rabbis, leaders and educators to raise the spirit of their flock and reach out beyond their insular circle.

A Light to the Nations

While the Rebbe's entire being is representative of Judaism, and though the Rebbe was known, first and foremost, as a loyal shepherd for the Jewish people,

A CALL FROM THE REBBE'S OFFICE

When I left the rabbinate for the private sector, I decided to publish a short Torah message on a card, measuring 3x6 inches, and insert it with my periodic company mailings. Included on the card was my name, address and telephone number. I added the Lubavitcher Rebbe to my mailing list.


There came a time when I stopped publishing the card. Something amazing happened. The Rebbe's secretary telephoned me, in the Rebbe's name, asking why the cards with the spiritual message were no longer included! Even now when I think of it, I find it difficult to understand. With all the thousands of letters which the Rebbe received, with all the responsibilities entailed in guiding his worldwide movement, the Rebbe had noticed that the card was missing and he took the time to remind me to resume mailing it!

– From the introduction to the book “My Soul Thirsts,” by Rabbi Zalman Aryeh Hilsenrad



On numerous occasions, the Rebbe dedicated lengthy talks to the cause of improving public school education, particularly regarding moral values, and to heighten the consciousness of mankind towards charity, ethical values and principles – based on the recognition of, and submission to, a Supreme Authority.

Similarly, in private audiences, the Rebbe urged Jewish and a non-Jewish leaders to utilize the influence of their offices for the betterment of the economic and social life of mankind. He also called upon Jewish people, who, through commerce and otherwise, come into contact with non-Jewish people, to make their acquaintances aware of their moral and ethical charge.

In the Rebbe's world, everyone, in his or her own way, can and must join in to transform the Universe into a welcome "home for G-d." 

CONCERN FOR ALL MANKIND

The Rebbe's counsel was sought by national and international government officials of all levels.

After one such meeting with US Senator Patrick Moynihan, the Rebbe asked if he could request a favor from the Senator.

"Here it comes," the Senator thought to himself, "Now the Rebbe is looking for the payoff."

The Rebbe continued: "There is a growing community in Chinatown. These people are quiet, reserved, hard-working, and law-abiding – the type of citizens most countries would treasure. But because Americans are so outgoing and the Chinese are, by nature, so reserved, they are often overlooked. Thus they miss out benefitting from government programs. I suggest that as US senator from New York, you concern yourself with their needs."

"I was overwhelmed," the Senator said afterwards. "The Rebbe has a community of thousands in New York City and institutions all over the State that could benefit from government programs. I am in a position to help secure funding for them. The Rebbe didn't ask about that. Instead, he was concerned with the Chinese in Chinatown. I don't think he has ever been there, and I'm certain that most people there don't know who he is, but he cares about them..."

Yearning for Moshiach

"From the time that I was a child attending cheder, and even earlier than that, there began to take form in my mind a vision of the future Redemption: the redemption of Israel from its last exile, redemption such as would explicate the suffering, the decrees and the massacres of galut (exile)."

—The Rebbe, in a 1956 letter to Israel's president

Yearning for Moshiach

The Rebbe imparted to his Shluchim and to each person with whom he came in contact, a spirit of freedom that that would enable them to dedicate their lives to the care of others.

This freedom is expressed through total immersion in the wellbeing of his or her particular sphere of influence: family, neighborhood, and so forth. For the individual *Shliach*, this freedom is, for the most part, expressed through concern for a particular country, state, city, institution, or program.

However, the Rebbe's ultimate concern was the entire world – the entirety of the Jewish people and all of humankind.

Only a great soul, free of personal constraints, can truly care about the ultimate fulfillment of creation, the destiny of the world, and global wellbeing. ▶

ABOUT MOSHIACH

One of the principles of Judaism is faith in the fulfillment of G-d's promise for a peaceful and perfect world that will be ushered in with the arrival of *Moshiach*.

Moshiach, according to Torah and the prophets, is a righteous person – a human being – whose personality and teaching will inspire the world to serve one G-d, and to act in a peaceful and harmonious manner.

Faith in the imminent coming of *Moshiach* is a constant – it has kept the Jewish spirit and hope alive in good times and bad – ever since we were exiled from our land some 2,000 years ago.

EVERYTHING IN ITS SEASON

From the very start, the Rebbe steered the world Jewish consciousness to the orientation of redemption – true *tikkun olam* and awareness of *Moshiach* – undertaking the most daring mission of all: to bring the world toward the era of *Moshiach* and redemption for humankind.

The Rebbe always talked about *Moshiach*. In his first public discourse, upon accepting the mantle of leadership, he declared that this is the mission of our generation. At the time, his audience did not fully appreciate the meaning and true magnitude of the Rebbe's vision.



However, rather than overwhelm his listeners with a concept for which they were not yet prepared, he enabled them to proceed gradually, through study of Torah, observance of *mitzvos*, leading a Jewish life, and reaching out to others with vigor and enthusiasm.

Despite the global, even cosmic, scope of his goal, the Rebbe proceeded in an orderly fashion. He educated his Chasidim and the world progressively and gradually – *mitzvah* by *mitzvah*, campaign by campaign. He emphasized the

value of particular, individual *mitzvos* and their respective connections to specific times. He dispatched his emissaries, *shliach* by *shliach*, community by community, to help raise the consciousness of the Jewish people, to promulgate the Jewish orientation of spirituality, Divinity, and the absolute necessity of living a G-dly, Torah life.

He pointed to the changes in the world. And only then, when he felt that the world was ready, did the Rebbe launch the *Moshiach* campaign, addressing the very purpose of the giving of the Torah, the creation of the world, and the secret of our service throughout the ages – to bring the world to a state of perfection and recognition of the one G-d.

His restraint and patience were remarkable, for over the course of so many years he put such effort into and emphasis on the means to this desired end. Only a leader like the Rebbe could contain his own passionate desire for the sake of his flock and the ultimate realization of the intended goal.

This was truly the Rebbe's ultimate desire: to see the world perfected, to see the fruition of Creation's very purpose – that the world become an abode for the Divine. Hence, the Rebbe's overarching desire for the coming of *Moshiach* and the era of redemption.

In his own words, the Rebbe described himself “obsessed” with *Moshiach*.

The Rebbe yearned for *Moshiach* not only because it would bring an end to the world's pain and suffering, but moreover, because the era of *Moshiach* is the ultimate destiny of the world and the purpose for which it was created.

As one who was able to see things from a broader and higher perspective, the Rebbe saw all of Jewish history— from our sojourn in the desert through the saga of our exiles up until the present day – as a continuous path leading inexorably toward the ultimate goal of Creation.

So, too, the Rebbe saw every positive action of each individual as a redemptive act in its own right, and a step on the road to global Redemption. For each *mitzvah* and each word of Torah contains G-d's infinite energy – wherein lies the secret of another advancement toward the ultimate goal of perfecting this world as a place where G-d “feels at home.”

Global Village, Global Destiny

Throughout the ages, *Moshiach* was an immediate concern only for the loftiest *tzadikim* (righteous people), who constantly directed their thoughts and actions toward this end.

Ordinary Jews, preoccupied with earning a living and struggling to maintain their Jewishness, could not have been expected to be occupied with the concern of the ultimate destiny of the world.



Even Torah scholars and pious Jews who devoted their lives to the service of G-d did so out of their love for Him and in order to fulfill His will – as individuals, satisfying their thirst to come close to G-d.

However, as the world moves closer to that perfect time, indications abound that the world has changed. The tyranny of Communism has been relegated to history's dust bin. Jews have been gathering in the Land of Israel. There is hardly a government anywhere in the world that openly endorses anti-G-d policies.

Today it is actually possible for everyone to direct his or her thoughts and deeds toward the world's destiny.

Furthermore, as the world truly becomes a global village, we see empirically ▶

that what happens in one small corner of the world affects the entire world. Today the idea of global destiny is not merely less foreign than it once was, it is our daily reality.

Accordingly, the Rebbe's final and most prominent awareness campaign is to

insist that Jews, who for thousands of years have prayed and asked of G-d to "return in mercy to Jerusalem," should now say these words with heightened intensity, to direct their actions toward the fulfillment of this goal, and to bring this dream to the very forefront of their lives. ▶

THE CALL FOR PARTNERSHIP

In his clarion call on the 28th of Nissan, 5751 (1991), the Rebbe called upon everyone to tune in to the idea of *Moshiach* and to arouse a genuine yearning for his coming.

In his opening statement, the Rebbe said: "I have done all that I could... [Now I] give it over to you to do all that you can – indeed, *oros d'tohu* (a kabbalistic term connoting an immense force), but [it should be] in *keilim d'tikkun* (contained in an orderly fashion) to bring *Moshiach*...."

In keeping with the Rebbe's *modus operandi* of allowing and encouraging individual style and personal expression in the service of G-d, in calling upon everyone to join in the effort to bring *Moshiach*, inevitably there would be diverse ways with which people would identify and in which they would exhibit their desire for His coming.

To caution that it would be done in the right way, the Rebbe immediately added that, even though it is *oros d'tohu*, an enormous task, nevertheless it must be in *keilim d'tikkun*, an orderly fashion. He was telling his audience that even though this campaign, by its very nature, is beyond their ordinary orientation, requiring enthusiasm and vigor, it must, however, be contained and channeled in a traditional, balanced manner. Specifically, he was stressing that the same methods of the study of Torah and observance of *mitzvos* must be utilized, but with an added measure of a desire to affect the coming of *Moshiach*.

In the following eleven months, in every public talk in which the Rebbe referred to the imminent coming of *Moshiach*, without exception, he stressed that the true significance of this realization is in translating it into a greater diligence in the study of Torah and observance of *mitzvos*.

As with every other point of his campaigns, the Rebbe took the twelfth principle of our faith (as enumerated by Maimonides) out of the books and into the awareness of the broader Jewish community. He made it part of the Jewish lexicon and program.

However, he did so in the spirit of "I give it over to you" – everyone is invited to join in the campaign. Such all-inclusiveness will inevitably result in some errors derived from varying modes of personal expression. Eventually, however, regardless of individual perceptions, everyone will come to realize that the desire for *Moshiach* must be matched by action of Torah and *mitzvos*, in the way the Rebbe taught then, and throughout the years.



The Rebbe called upon every Jew to connect consciously to this destiny, the true *tikun olam* (perfecting the world), by intensifying our commitment to achieve this end through goodness and holiness.

Bringing us into the Boardroom

Thanks to the Rebbe, the idea of *Moshiach* is no longer an abstraction.

He elevated us and empowered us to appreciate its centrality in Judaism, and to understand why it is one of the principles of our faith.

No longer is the idea of *Moshiach* a reward, simply a prize for good behavior.

The Rebbe taught that the redemption is an outgrowth of our actions. It is the ultimate goal for which the world was created.

He brought us “into the boardroom,” so to speak, and afforded us a view from the inside.

It took the Rebbe over four decades to bring us around to this orientation.

Forty-four years of raising Jewish consciousness, of elevating the spirit of the global Jewish community – campaign by campaign, individual by individual, program by program, institution by institution, state by state, country by country.

Forty-four years of exemplifying and teaching how to free ourselves of our own pettiness, how to look beyond ourselves – all of this laid the groundwork so that everyone might accept their share in the universal concern for the destiny of creation. 📖

Devotion and Loyalty to his Rebbe

The Rebbe lived a life that personified all that he taught. He helped others see each thing in brighter light, revealed its true depth, broadened its scope and expanded its reach. Any topic or thing he touched was elevated to new heights, but always – always! – grounded in the firm foundation of Torah, with acknowledgement only to the original texts and sources, with no ascription to his own genius. By the time the Rebbe finished illuminating some Talmudic, mystical, or even worldly aspect, it seemed so simple, so evident, so “right there” in the original text, one couldn’t imagine it otherwise.

One characteristic that stood out about the Rebbe was his *hiskashrus*, his deep bond and utter dedication to his own Rebbe, his sainted father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn of righteous memory.

The Rebbe expounded upon the concept of *hiskashrus* – both the Torah’s description of the need for it and the vital role it plays in Jewish life.

In the Torah, Joshua is called “*meshores Moshe*” – the servant of Moses, about whom the Torah testifies, “He did not budge from [Moses’] tent.” The Rebbe was the same – he never ceased to be in the presence of his own Rebbe, even after his predecessor’s passing.

In speaking of his father-in-law, the Rebbe emphasized the importance of devotion to one’s Rebbe. He cited the



Mechilta (a Talmudic commentary on the Torah) on the verse, “And they believed in G-d and in Moses, His servant,” to the effect that belief and trust in Moses is critically important to nurturing and facilitating belief in G-d.

A Jew is obligated to serve G-d on his own, utilizing his own intelligence and emotions. Nevertheless, a human being who confronts ongoing physical, material, emotional, intellectual, and environmental challenges cannot rise above them all and transform them into goodness and holiness without being energized by a loftier, more transcendent ▶

force. This is what a Rebbe is – a *neshamah*, a soul of a higher order, for whom the entire world with all its challenges are as naught, and who activates that perception in all who are connected to him.

A Tzadik's Presence

Even after the passing of his father-in-law, the Rebbe eclipsed himself under the mantle of his Rebbe, whom he considered the source of his energy and the inspiration for his mission.

The Rebbe would regularly visit the sixth Rebbe's resting place and, with few exceptions, in responding to requests for blessings would write "*azkir al hatziyun*," roughly translated as: I will bring this request to the resting place of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, for blessings and intercession on your behalf.

The Rebbe explained the age-old Kabbalistic precept that a tzadik remains present in this world even after his passing, and that in fact, without the physical limitation, he is more present and his influence and blessings are even more effective.

Even forty years into his own leadership, his Rebbe's presence seemed always to


be there to guide, to energize, to bless and to intercede on behalf of the world.

Today, too, whether for a blessing, to share a *simchah*, or to unburden their souls, Jews from all walks of life gravitate to the Rebbe's resting place, where they seek assurance from the inner bond that continues to fortify them.

It is this sense of connection with the Rebbe that inspires hundreds of young couples to go out on *Shlichus* – to fulfill the Rebbe's lifelong desire to actualize the purpose for which the world was created: to help bring about the day when "the knowledge of G-d will fill the Earth, as water covers the sea."



The Rebbe's goal was to remove the barrier that separates heaven and earth, to reveal the G-dly essence of every phenomenon, to show the truth that unites all of creation.

The fruits of the Rebbe's efforts are manifest. But it remains for us to complete the task – to finally and completely bring heaven down to earth. 

To learn more about the Rebbe or to order this booklet,
visit **www.TheRebbeAnAppreciation.org**

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