

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

PARSHAS KEDOSHIM

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

LOVING THE BELOVED

CONTENTS

Part I. Love the Nation - 1

Part II. Love the Individual - 4

Part III. Love the Righteous - 7

Part I. Love the Nation

Imitatio Dei

One of the outstanding features of the Torah ideology and a big guide to success in life is the great principle of **הָיוּ דוֹמָה לּוֹ**, imitation of Hashem (Shabbos 133b). It's a fundamental principle that every *frum* Jew lives with, achieving perfection in this world by means of imitating his G-d.

Now the truth is that even among *goyim*, *lehavdil*, it was always an ideal. It makes sense after all; if you're seeking perfection then what's the best model to follow? Your god of course. And so among the gentile religions they say the same thing; they call it 'imitatio Dei,' to imitate their god. Only that what they're imitating, it's nothing godly.

I could tell you stories about the Greek gods, the Egyptian gods, the Christian ones too, but I don't want to be accused of insulting the *goyim*. One little piece I will tell you. If a man is born from a woman who admits that her husband was not the father of this baby, that's a terrible model. That's the big holiday for them, you know. Don't think it's a small thing. It's a terrible thing. And Mohammad? Mohammad himself tells a story how he put his eye

on a strange woman. That's all I'm going to say about it. I could tell you much more than that but it's worth knowing that all the *ovdei avodah zarah* are corrupting their minds because of their gods. I could tell you very many things; I've studied the subject. Take it from me, there's no perfection they'll acquire by emulating their gods.

But the Jews, they emulate a Hashem that is perfect. Jews emulate Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the Holy One Blessed Be He, and that's why they became a holy people. We have the real thing, the Original; we have the true 'Dei' to imitate and that became the ideal of our nation, to emulate our perfect G-d.

Emulating Perfection

Now, this ideal, this way of living, is so important that it's repeated in various ways in the Torah. But one of the most prominent ones is found in the opening of this week's *sedrah*. **קְדוּשִׁים תִּהְיוּ** - You should be holy, **כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֱנִי ה'** אֱלֹהֵיכֶם - because I, Hashem your G-d, is holy. It's a command: "Make yourselves perfect - that's what *kadosh* means, perfection - by emulating Me." But it's also the ultimate guide for perfection of our character, our thinking, our behavior.

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Dedicated on the 50th yartzzeit of my beloved father

R'Yitzhak ben R'Chaim z'l on Shushan Purim.

Loved and Dearly Missed by his son

Mark (Yerucham) Halpern, Toronto, Canada.

כי קדוש אני means that I, Hashem, am *shaleim betachlis hashleimus*, the epitome of perfection, and therefore, קדושים תהיו – *I want you to be perfect by using Me as your model.*

And so why should we be such superficial people? After all, we come across that verse sometimes when we're studying, don't we? At least when the *baal korei* reads the Torah we hear it: 'Make yourselves holy, because I am holy.' And it's not a recommendation, an *eitzah tovah*; it's an obligation, and therefore shouldn't we think about that sometimes? 'What are the ways of perfection of Hashem that I should try to emulate?'

Heavenly Love

It's a lifetime project, a lifetime of work, because the perfection of Hashem is endless. There are so many ways of behavior, of attitudes and ideals that we have to pattern our lives after. Tonight, however, we'll study just one of them, one of the most fundamental Mindsets, *kavayachol*, of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And it's expected of us that we should acquire that same mindset so that we too should be *kadosh*.

What is it? You'll be surprised. It's what we're going to say soon in Maariv, in the second *brachah* of *Shema*. We say אהב עמו ישראל, *the One Who loves His people Yisroel*. אהבתי אתכם אמר ה' – *I love you, He says* (Malachi 1:2). It says openly, black on white, that He loves Jews. Again and again we're told that אהבתי עולם, *that Hashem loves us forever* (Yirmiyahu 31:3).

Now, if that's so, we understand that one of the ways that we are expected to resemble Hashem, to emulate and imitate Him, is by being an אהב עמו ישראל like He is. Included in the perfection of Hashem is His *ahavas Yisroel*, and קדושים תהיו means therefore, 'Become perfect like Me by loving the Am Yisroel.'

Loving the Beloved

It's a big *chiddush* you're hearing now. What's the foundation of *ahavas Yisroel*? It's not what people

think, merely a mitzvah of allegiance to our people, like the black man who identifies with his fellow black. *Ahavas Yisroel* means we're trying to imitate the thoughts, the emotions, *kavayachol*, of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. הוי דומה לו – *Be like Him!* קדושים תהיו – *Be ambitious to emulate His love.* We have to love our fellow Jews *because* Hashem loves them.

And don't say you do. Yes, you have a certain patriotism but that's nothing. I'm talking about love, about genuine affection, not empty platitudes.

Love means love! Did you ever see a mother holding her little baby? She kisses him on one cheek and then the other cheek and then back again and back again. She considers him so delectable. 'I love you so much,' she says, 'I want to eat you up.' And she means it.

A Burning Love

That's nothing yet because Hashem's love is much greater than our puny little emotions. A mother's love is only a faint semblance of אהבתי אתכם. Hashem loves every *frum* Jew with an intense love, a fiery love; רשפיה רשפי אש, like burning coals of fire. But not like regular coals; it's a love that burns like a nuclear fire. Like the sun, it'll burn forever and ever that fire of love that Hashem has for every Jew. That's what it means Hashem is אהב עמו ישראל.

Now, we'll never be able to love like He does, with a nuclear fire of love, but תהיו means you should keep working on it. תהיו – *You should become!* You loved a little bit yesterday? Today you'll love them even more. Tomorrow, you'll start from where you left off and תהיו, you'll become even more. It's a man-sized job; an obligation that never ends.

But How?

Now, how to do it, that's the question. How to be an אהב עמו ישראל? How do you gain a real attitude of loving your people?

The first step is to say it. "I love Your people, Hashem. *Ribono Shel Olam ich hob leib dein folk* – Hashem, I love Your people."

You never said it yet? Not once in your whole lifetime? You might have to come back again to this world and do it over again, in a *gilgul* maybe. You didn't live correctly. You didn't even start.

Say it now. You should be *yotzei* at least once. Don't be ashamed; Hashem agrees with you. Say it now quietly, "I love my people."

Once In A Lifetime

Even if you never do it again, it's something. After a hundred and twenty years when your time is up and you'll come to the Next World, they're going to ask you, "Did you ever say those words in your life, 'I love my people'?"

"I think I said it once in Flatbush. I was in Rabbi Miller's shul and I said it. Once."

"Ooh ah!" the *malach* will say. "He did it! This man did it!"

So even one time is something! But don't stop now. You're on your way! So now you keep going. Let's say you're standing at the bus stop or you're walking to the shul. Ah! An opportunity to fulfill this mitzvah of *קְרוּשִׁים תְּהִי*, to love our fellow Jews just like He does. "Hashem, I know that You love the Am Yisroel and so I'm going to do it too. I'm going to say it at least. *I love Your people, Hashem.*"

Long Distance Love

Say, "I love the people in Bnei Brak." Imagine people in Bnei Brak; they all have big black hats, long beards. They walk in the street with Jewish dignity. The truth is they're better than we think they are, much better, and Hashem loves them very, very much. "And so I'm going to love them too. Right now, I'm standing at the bus stop in Flatbush and I'm loving all the Bnei Brak'ers."

Tomorrow, love the Yerushalmi Jews too. They're so holy, so beloved by Hashem. 'I love them too'. Say it. Say it a few times. Little by little you'll begin to mean it. If you can help them out when they come to America and give them some money, certainly you

should do so. Or send money to them. If you love them, you'd do that.

Local Love

Practice loving people in Boro Park. The fact that you don't mind them? No. It's not enough that you tolerate them. Hashem wants you to love them. When you walk in Boro Park, a side street, outside you see children and children and children. Love those children! They're *zera kodesh*. Love the children today.

When you see a crowd of girls from a *frum* school, *frum* girls walking in the street it's *mamash* a *machaneh Elokim*. There's nothing like it in the world. Nowhere will you find such girls like the Beis Yaakov girls, the Beis Rochel girls.

Love the *yeshivos*. Ah! What a wise thing to do! "I love the yeshivah." You know some people walk by a yeshivah and they walk by the same as if they're passing a public school. They're not thinking anything. When you pass by a yeshivah say "I love the yeshivah. I love the yeshivah boys."

Loving the Neighborhood

It's such an opportunity when you live in a *frum* neighborhood. Don't just say, "It's nice, it's so nice a *frum* neighborhood." Nooo! Get excited with *ahavah*. "I love Hashem's people!" You have to say it constantly and put in as much emotion as you can. *Say it until your eyes flow with tears.* "I love my people. I love my noble people. I love my holy people. I love my people." Again and again. Say it constantly. And little by little, *הַמְחֹשְׁבָה נִמְשָׁכֶת אַחַר הַרְבוּר* – *your thoughts begin to follow your words.* You actually become filled with love. You appreciate them. You admire them. You care about them. You want only good for them. You'll see, your eyes begin to flow with tears of emotion.

Now I don't say that you should run over and embrace every Jew you see – we're not such hypocrites; we can't do that. They'll take you to the *meshugeneh* house. But you should learn to have a certain feeling that the *frum* Jews are beloved by

Hashem and therefore, just because of that, I'm going to love them too.

Love Comes Easy

It's not so hard. A Jew is a pleasure to look at. A Jew is a kosher face, with a kosher stomach. A Jew has a mind, a kosher mind. A Jew is a different kind of a *briah*. It's a pleasure to look at them. Look at their faces and fall in love with those faces.

I look at you right now, all of my friends sitting here, and it's so easy to fall in love with you. The *temimus*, honesty, *kedushah* I see on your Jewish faces. Some traveled a big distance to come here. It's a pleasure to see such idealists, honest people, *temimim*, *tzenuim*. I love you.

That's how it should be because Hakadosh Baruch Hu is like that. He loves you! **אוהב עמו יִשְׂרָאֵל!** He loves you very much and I'm going to love you too.

Part II. Love the Individual

One at a Time

Now, it's a very big achievement if you'll acquire that attitude of loving the Am Yisroel. If you love the Jews in Bnei Brak, you're living for a purpose. You love the Jews in Brooklyn and Williamsburg and Lakewood? Excellent! All the *frum* Jews in Chicago, in Los Angeles, wherever they are. And you love them because you're trying to love those that Hashem loves. A tremendous achievement!

And yet that's only the beginning; there's more to this mitzvah. Because included in **קִרְוֵם תְּהִי כִי קְרוֹשׁ** **אָנִי** is to love the individual Jew too. Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves, not only the nation, He loves Reuven on his own, and Yosef on his own, and Berel and Sarah and Chana and Ettel; every single Yisroel is beloved by Him. One at a time He loves them! And so that's the ideal we have to aim for – that's what we're ambitious to achieve.

Now, that ideal is given to us in the form of a command in this week's *sedrah*: **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ** – *And you should love your fellow Jew, each individual, like you love yourself* (Vayikra 19:18). It means you have to love that plain Jew over there. You see him sometimes on the street. You have no business with him. He doesn't even greet you. You have to learn how to love him.

He's Not My Type

Now, that's a little more difficult maybe because when you begin to think of the individual so it could be he gets on your nerves. Maybe you don't like his nose so much. Some people are like that; they have a predilection, a taste, for straight noses. They cannot stand a nose that stands out like a cliff.

Even if you like his nose, maybe he doesn't think like you do; he follows a different set of political objectives than you do. He wears a *yarmulke* like this; it's one material and you wear a different kind of material. Maybe he's a Satmerer and you have different ideas. You have a different rebbe. And he tells you his opinion about things; you didn't ask for it but he tells you. It's not so easy to love *everyone*.

One Nation Under G-d

So along comes our *possuk*, **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ**, and it says to us, no matter! As long as he's **רַעַךְ בְּמִצְוֹת**, he keeps the *mitzvos*, so he qualifies for your love. Just because let's say you're a Bobover *chossid* and he's a Belzer *chossid* or a Lubavitcher *chossid* makes no difference; these names don't make any dichotomy between us. Hashem loves him, that's the only thing that matters.

Now, it's easy to say this but fulfilling it, that's not so simple. You have to train yourself; it has to be done with a program, a system. Otherwise, you're *mekayem* **כְּמוֹךָ**, that's all. You love yourself. This Jew over here (*the Rov pointed at himself*) you love very much all your life. But **רַעַךְ כְּמוֹךָ**, your fellow like yourself? No, it doesn't even begin.

Taking Good Advice

So I'll tell you an *eitzah* of one of the *gedolei mussar* of Europe, one of the biggest *balei mussar* in the world at that time. I heard this from him sixty two years ago. Pay attention because this *eitzah* is worth money. It's an *eitzah hagunah*, it's worth millions, but you have to do it. Otherwise it's worth zero.

"Start with one person," he said. "To love all people all of a sudden is not easy." תַּפְסֵת מְרִבָּה לֹא תִפְסֵת – If you take hold of too much at one time you can't do it; it's too heavy; you'll drop it. Pick one Jew and work on him. Make up your mind you'll specialize in him. Whether he's a *chaver* or one of your *rebbeim* or that person you see on the street every day, say "I love that man." Say the words *baal peh*, "I love that man."

At first it's *min hasafah el hachutz*, it doesn't mean a thing. Keep on saying it anyhow. You see him on the street far away - "I love that man." He doesn't have any especial love for you, but you ignore that. You're worried about yourself now, so try to think about him in terms of the Torah.

Strategic Love

It shouldn't be empty, hollow words. You should think of reasons to love him. וּבְתַחֲבוּלוֹת עֲשֵׂה מְלֻחָמָה – With strategems you make war (Mishlei 20:18); it means war against the *yetzer hara*. So think of things to love about him. If he has a nice smile, grab onto that. If he has a nice way of talking, nice manners *al achas kamah v'kamah*; you can imagine all good things about him.

When you see his face from a distance, say, isn't he a nice looking man? Every Jew, every *frum* Jew is a *tzelem Elokim*; no question, every *frum* face is a *tzelem Elokim*. If he has a nice face, love him for his nice face.

Looking for an Excuse

Even his necktie. He wears a nice necktie? Love him for that. You say it's nothing? So it's nothing. You know there's such a thing as *sinas chinam*; but there's

ahavas chinam too - it's no sin to love him for nothing. So imagine that you like him because of the way he dresses. Why not? A nice looking face, a pleasant face and a pleasant tie.

If he's a plumber, love him for that; we need Jewish plumbers. If he's a doctor, he's a valuable personality; we should love him for that. If he's a *melamed*, he teaches Jewish children, we should love him for that. Find excuses for loving him. These are good excuses.

The Best Excuse

Now all these things are true calculations, they're *cheshbonos shel emes*; but you have to know that the biggest *cheshbon*, the overriding thought as you continue to concentrate on that person, is that Hashem loves him. That's the reason for everything! 'Hashem loves him and therefore I love him too.'

You're hearing something now that's very important because there can be a very great error in this program. When people undertake a career of loving their fellow Jews, whether they mean it superficially or seriously, they sometimes make a very great error. Because what is a Jew really? He is nobody. He's a human being. הַיּוֹם כְּאֵן וּמָחָר בְּקִבְרֵךְ. Here today, gone tomorrow. What's so important about him? He's 170, 180 pounds of protoplasm. He's a mountain of protoplasm, that's all.

Hashem's Beloved One

The answer is only one reason why he's so important. Because Hashem is with him. Because Hashem loves him. No question about it. This man, this plain Jew who sits all the way in the back of the shul, if he believes in *Torah min haShomayim*, if he believes in *Hashem Elokei Yisroel* then Hashem loves him.

After all, he's a man who keeps Shabbos. He's a *shomer Torah u'mitzvos*. He has a *frum* family, *frum* children. He *davens* every day, he talks to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. He wears *arba kanfos*, he puts on *tefillin*, eats kosher. He's careful not to do what's an *aveirah*.

He's making a living, I suppose. He's paying tuition. He's behind in the payments maybe but he's paying. He gives *tzedakah* too. "That's what I love," Hashem says. "I love a Jew who keeps *mitzvos*. I love every single Jew, each one on his own, more than I love the whole *briyah* with all the stars, all the nations, all the billions of worlds in space."

Aim High

And that's what we're aiming for. Like I said before, we'll never love him like Hashem does but more and more, every little bit is an achievement. Think about him always. Keep him in mind every day and little by little, you'll find that you're loving him more and more.

I did it once. Years ago when I used to work on *mussar*, I did this. I was staying in a country with a certain family in Europe, a butcher family, plain ordinary people. I made it my business to fall in love with the butcher. Every day I walked behind the dunes on the beach, I was thinking how I could love him. I was thinking about what words I could say to him that would encourage him, words that would make him feel happy. That was in the olden days when I still had a *shaychus* to the *mussar* of Slabodka.

Pray For Him

I *davened* for him too. That's a good idea by the way. The one that you chose to start with, *daven* for him. Instead of thinking only about yourself – that's the true love of your life – or about your family, maybe try to also think about this Jew across the street. Think about him too.

Of course I want to be healthy but I'm practicing up now *וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֵךְ כְּמוֹךָ* and I'm going to think about him too. He should have a healthy heart. He shouldn't get any headaches. He shouldn't catch any colds. Think about that.

By the other *brachos* too. He should have good *parnassah*. He should get a raise and he should get along with his boss. He should have *shalom* in his house and with his neighbors.

Slowly but Surely

That's the way to do it; think about him always, when you see him in the street and in the *davening* and whenever else you remind yourself. And little by little the *ahavah* increases in you until you finally have a real affection for him. You love him.

Nobody knows about it but you have a diamond, a gem, that's growing bigger and bigger every day. Continue to work on your love for that man. It's a big accomplishment. At least with one Jew you're *mekayem* *וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֵךְ* in your lifetime; at least one Jew.

Spreading Love

And you'll see that after you get a certain appreciation of that person, it's not going to be limited to him; it'll begin to spread to other people. It's contagious. Little by little, it'll begin to spread.

How is that? Because you learn to love one Jew intensely, so you'll get the knack of it and you'll be able to add on others as well. Why not? After a while, let's say after ten years that you've been loving that man so much, you'll start thinking, why only him? And what about this man over here? And what about this other one over there? And it begins to spread and spread.

Adding Forever

It'll become a habit. Little by little, you're *machnis ahavah* in your heart to any *frum* Jew that you come into contact with. And so for example even when a *meshulach*, a stranger, comes to your door, he's not a stranger at all. Because you're already well-trained. You look at him through the eyes of Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who loves him very much. And so you won't just help him. Of course you will but you'll do much more.

You'll see what happens. Once you start loving Jews you have to know that it won't stop there. It can't, because you're emulating Hakadosh Baruch Hu and He loves all of us, every single one with a tremendous *ahavah*. And once you have a program

for success so you'll add and add. More and more Jews you'll love like He does. And if you live long enough, you'll have a certain love, a *chibah*, to all *frum* Jews.

Part III. Love the Righteous

Greater Than Nuclear Power

Now, when we study this mitzvah of *ahavas Yisroel*, of emulating the love that Hashem has for His people, there is another point that requires our attention. And that is **ה' אוהב צדיקים** – *Hashem loves the righteous* (Tehillim 146:8). As much as Hashem loves His nation, He loves the *tzaddikim* of His nation even more.

Now, I can't describe what's more than the love of the Am Yisroel; how could we express in words a love that's greater than a nuclear fire of love? But it's so; Hashem loves the *frum* Jews because they are His loyal ones, and He loves with an even more intense love, a more powerful and especial love, the *tzaddikim* who are especially loyal.

And if you think you can ignore this – you're too busy for such things – you're learning Torah, you're doing *mitzvos*; who has time for such things like loving *tzaddikim*? – so you're making a big mistake. It's an absolute *chiyuv* and we have to get to work on it. Included in **קדושים תהיו** is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu expects us to emulate Him by making a career of loving the especially righteous ones of our nation.

What's the Criterion?

Now, it doesn't mean that you find a *tzaddik* you get along with, you agree with. If you pass let's say a big *rosh yeshivah* and he stops and he says "My son, how are you?" – he puts his hand on your shoulder and he inquires and makes you feel good – so you love him. Big deal! You know why you love him? Because he has bribed you. He has given you a feeling of happiness.

But suppose there's a *tzaddik* who never raises his eye from the sidewalk. He walks with his eyes on the ground because he's thinking only about Hashem. He's occupied. Or he's thinking about the *shiur* that he has to give in the *yeshivah* this afternoon. So this *tzaddik* doesn't notice you. Do you love him? Not really. Because we measure love by how much we get out of the person. That's our criterion.

Loving Righteousness

So the question is on what basis does Hakadosh Baruch Hu love *tzaddikim*? Do they do Him any favors? What does He get out of them? Do they make Him feel good? They're insignificant and meaningless to Him.

And still He loves them. You know why? Because **צדקות אהב** – *He loves righteousness* (*ibid.* 11:7). Not because it's combined with a personality that makes Him feel warm. Hashem doesn't feel warm; it's not the warmth of contact with a *tzaddik*. Hashem loves the *tzaddik* because of his *tzidkus*, his righteousness.

And that's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants from us. *Hevei domeh lo* means we have to love righteousness like He does. It means if you can come to the degree that there's a *tzaddik* who walks on the other side of Ocean Parkway – you never were near him; he never said any kind words to you and he never will – but because you know he's a *tzaddik* you love him, then you have arrived. You're somebody. You're emulating Hashem.

Starting With the Roshei Yeshivah

And therefore we have to get busy loving *tzaddikim*. We have them. Where are they? They're all around you. *Baruch Hashem* we have many *tzaddikim*. Our nation is not lacking *tzaddikim* – we're lacking only people who love them. Not to tolerate them – to love them.

Now whom do you start with? I would say it's easier to start with the *roshei yeshivah*. Today *yeshivahs* are sprouting like mushrooms after a rainstorm and that means there are many *roshei*

yeshivah. Big ones, small ones, smaller ones. Start loving them with a *chibah yiseirah*, even more than for a fellow Jew.

The truth is, loving *roshei yeshivah* is quite easy. They are quiet people. They do their duty. They're raising up many young men to Torah. Of course they're also more proficient in learning than most people are. They're busy sometimes with *tzarχει tzibbur*.

It's true, sometimes they bother you to come to the yeshivah dinner but we shouldn't hold that against them. And therefore we should start with a great respect for *roshei yeshivah*. But respect is not enough however – we have to start *loving* the *roshei yeshivah*.

Don't think it's exaggerated. After all, someday you have to start working on these things that Hashem expects of you. ה' אוהב צדיקים. He's doing it already. He loves the *roshei yeshivah* very much. What about you?

Rav Hutner's Haskama

And therefore you should pick one and start your career in *oheiv tzaddikim*. Let's say, I'll just pick at random, learn how to love Rav Pam. He's the head of Torah V'daas. I knew him as a young man. I'm older than he is but I knew him as a young man. I once heard Rav Hutner *zichrono levrachah* speak about him. "He's a very fine young man," he said. "An especially fine young man!"

Today he's an old man already. He's been a *rosh yeshivah* for many years. He's said many years *shiurim*. He's an *anav*, a very big *anav*. He does his work for the yeshivah, for the *talmidim*, but he's not looking for any publicity. Every day, for many years, he's in the yeshivah.

But I knew him when he was a young man and at that time, when Rav Hutner said that, so I paid attention. And I began to practice loving him. I saw him five times in my life and each time I saw him I

was thinking, "Hashem loves this man. Absolutely He does; he's a *tzaddik*. And so I love him too. I love him!"

Loving the Satmarer and the Bobover

Learn to love the present Satmarer Rav. I knew him also when he was a young man. I first saw him when he came to listen to Rav Moshe Feinstein after *davening* in the morning. Rav Moshe was taking off his *tefillin* and was saying some *divrei Torah*. The Satmarer Rav was a young man, standing there and listening. I saw that there was a love of *talmidei chachamim* in his eyes. He was a Satmarer and Rav Moshe Feinstein was a Litvak but because he loved Torah, he came and listened with such a *derech erez* to what Rav Moshe was saying. That was the first time I saw him.

The Bobover Rav too I remember as a young man. I remember him in the country. He was far away from the *minyan* but he was the first one to come to the *minyan* every morning. The first one! From a big distance he walked every morning but he was always the first one there. And he was a real *baal derech erez*. It was a pleasure to look at him. He was so easy to love.

You can love long distance too. In Eretz Yisroel there is a Rav Elyashiv; just to pick a name out of the directory (*Editor's note: This recording was from 1976, when Rav Elyashiv was relatively unknown*). Harav Elyashiv; a very fine Jew. A big *masmid*. Or Rav Abramsky. Besides being a big *gadol*, a very old man, he's a *tzaddik*. A very gentle man, a beloved man.

Now if you never met them or maybe you never heard of them make use of their names anyhow. Try to fall in love with Rav Elyashiv and Rav Abramsky in Eretz Yisroel.

Local Love

In Boro Park there are *tzaddikim*. Boro Park is packed with *tzaddikim*. And don't tell me any *leitzanus*, "Oh, but there are all kinds of people in Boro Park." I know all about Boro Park, more than you, and I'm telling you Boro Park is packed with

tzaddikim too. There are so many that this place, our shul, would be too little to let in the top *tzaddikim* in Boro Park. Even a bigger place couldn't take them in.

On every street you have *tzaddikim*, very big people but it's a good idea to think of a specific one. It's not a bad idea to pick out one every day and practice loving him. One today, another one tomorrow, another the next day. You have to hurry up and start because there are very many *tzaddikim* to love.

Nashim Tzidkaniyos

If you're a lady, you want to love a woman *tzaddik*? There's a Rebbetzin Kaplan. There are others but she is outstanding. Think about her, of all that she did. She gives her life to bring up generations of girls in the ways of the Torah. If not for Rebbetzin Kaplan, the picture of American Jews would be entirely different. Rav Aharon Kotler, *zichrono livracha*, said, "The *kollelim* in America wouldn't have been possible if they hadn't had the right kind of girls to marry." And she was the one who started in America the practice of girls who want husbands who are learning. It became an ambition.

And she pioneered in showing the way for many to have big families. She herself raised a big family. And therefore her example inspired a whole army of girls. She's a woman who is dedicated in her own life – she's raising a large Torah family – and in her institutional work. There's an ideal for people to love. So if you're a woman you can think about her all the time.

The Tzaddik Nistar

There's another woman, I won't say her name, but I noticed her ways in life. Never did she raise her voice to shout; always patient and gentle. Now, there was trouble in the house. Not always did they have all that they needed. Sometimes it was a little tight in *parnassah*. But never was there any anxiety. Always quiet. Always gentle. Always doing her duty.

And she brought up a very big family, a very big family of *tzaddikim*. But she was a very big *tzadeikes* herself. I think if I could be in Gan Eden anywhere near her I'd be happy. A person who brought up so many children *ken yirbu*, grandchildren *ken yirbu*, all of them *tzaddikim* – a tremendous accomplishment! And never once did I ever hear an angry word or any excitement; always quiet and gentle. And so there's no lack of *tzaddikim* and *tzidkaniyos* for us to love.

A Righteous Nation

Now, once you get the knack of *oheiv tzaddikim* so you'll be able to go back to the Am Yisroel, to the plain *poshuteh* Jew, and love him even more. Because really, עַמּוּךָ כִּלְמֵי צַדִּיקִים; we're a *frum* righteous nation (Yeshaya 60:21).

Now I don't say that in the same way that Rav Pam and Rav Elyashiv are *tzaddikim*. Many *frum* Jews maybe are still lacking. But to a certain extent every *frum* Jew is in the *geder* of a *tzaddik* if he's willing to curb his passions and limit his desires and he yields to the laws of the Torah. Even though he's not a man of high knowledge, he didn't study all the ideals of the Torah in the Gemara and in the *seforim*, and maybe he has to still do *teshuvah* for many things – however in a general sense every *shomer mitzvos* is a *tzaddik* whom Hashem loves very much.

The Career of Love

And so it's a career we're talking about now; a career of being in love with the Am Yisroel. We love the Jewish nation. We love our people! We love our nation because Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves us. And because He loves us more than anything else in the universe we love our nation more than anything else.

And if you do it, you have to know that you're embarking on the career of perfection, of *shleimus*. One of the highest degrees of perfection, of *kedushah*, that a Jew could attain is this degree of being an *oheiv Yisroel* like Hashem is.



QUESTION

We have an obligation to love Hashem and to love our fellow Jews. Whom do we have to love more, G-d or man?

ANSWER

You have to love Hakadosh Baruch Hu *b'chol livavcha*, with *all* your heart so that leaves no space for any competition. Only that Hakadosh Boruch Hu says that you have to obey Him and He says to love your fellow Jews. Part of loving Hashem with all your heart is loving your fellow Jew. If a person, however, forgets about Hashem and he thinks he'll concentrate with all his heart on loving his fellow man, that man is wasting his life. And so it's a great thing to love your fellow man but that's only if you do it in the service of Hashem.

You know, we are told that the Chofetz Chaim was a very kindly man. He went out of his way to help people. But he wasn't exceptional in inviting people to his home. He used to help people find places to stay. He used to pay money to support them when they were visiting his town. He paid for their lodging, for their food. But to take people into his home, he didn't do that if someone else could do it – he wasn't so generous. And somebody explained that this was because he didn't want to divide his loyalties to Hashem. He couldn't be a crony, he couldn't sit around all evening talking with his guests. He wanted to spend his time studying the Torah or to be in solitude with Hakadosh Boruch Hu.

A man who is in love with Hashem can't share his time freely with other people. And so although the Chofetz Chaim's heart was in *gemilas chassadim*. He did all the good deeds that you can imagine. But he did it because of ahavas Hashem. And so he didn't spend much time with other people; if he could avoid being a crony and hanging around together with people, that's what he did. Because to do otherwise detracted from his loyalty, his allegiance and his clinging to Hashem.

And therefore there's no question about the answer: **וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ** – You have to love Hashem with *all* your heart means that there's no room for anything else. **בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ** means with *all* your heart, with no divided loyalties. TAPE # 555 (June 1985)

And you're doing the very biggest favor to yourself. When you fulfill **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ**, when you love your fellow Jews, it's **כְּמוֹךָ** – you're really doing it to yourself. You're gaining a perfection, a greatness, because you become tied up to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You're a partner with Him. Just like He loves, you are standing at His side and together with Him, you're loving the Am Yisroel.

And the more we do, the more Hashem will love us. **אֵין הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ אוֹהֵב אֶלָּא לְמִי שְׂאוֹהֵב אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל** – *Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves only those who love His people*, **וְכָל מֵה שְׂאָדָם מַגְדִּיל אֶהְבְּתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל גַּם הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ**, **הוּא מַגְדִּיל עָלָיו** – *And the more a person increases his love of Yisroel, Hashem will increase his love of him* (Mesillas Yesharim, Chapter 19).

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Learning to Love His People

The mitzvah of loving your fellow Jew is not just a nice idea, it is something we have to practice and work towards attaining. Just as Hashem has a fiery eternal love towards every individual of the Am Yisroel, we too must work towards gaining that attitude. This week I will *bli neder* set aside two minutes every day to work on this. During the first minute I will think of one person and attempt to engender true feelings of love towards him or her. Every day for one minute I will try to generate more and more love towards this Jew utilizing whatever stratagem will bring me closer to my goal. During the second minute every day I will think of someone else, whether a community of frum Jews, a certain Yeshivah, a Tzaddik, or anybody, and try to feel some love toward them.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

132 - Loving His People I | **528** - Loving His People II | **845** - Praise the Righteous | **928** - Love Your Fellow | **E-178** - Loving the Beloved

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