

Love According to the Rebbe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

from Russia). Finally there was the holocaust, which terminated 1000 years of flourishing Jewish life in Europe.

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

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

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

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

So the Rebbe issued a "statement":

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

The Rebbe went on to explain that the fact that "each one embodies all three" has a twofold implication. It means that unless all three loves are present, neither of them is

complete. But it also means that where any one of the three exists, it will eventually bring about all three.

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

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

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

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

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

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Shneerson - The sixth Chabad Rebbe

A brief biography from Challenge

Rabbi Sholom Dovber, the fifth leader of the growing Chabad movement, was constantly kept busy by the growing number of public meetings, conferences and important Rabbinical convocations which he had to attend.

The endless stream of Chassidic delegations, people seeking his advice and guidance, the need to supervise and instruct his followers in addition to his personal need for Biblical and Chassidic study, made increasing inroads into working days which already stretched from early morning until late at night.

He decided to appoint a personal secretary to relieve him of part of this enormous burden. His choice was his fifteen-year-old son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn. Born on Tammuz

12, 5640 (1880) in Lubavitch, Russia, the young man had proved his ability in the field of study and was already acknowledged as a brilliant scholar. He was soon to prove himself to be a no less brilliant administrator with an outstanding talent for communal and civic activities.

In 5655 (1895) the young Rabbi participated in the great conference of religious and lay leaders in Kovno; and in the following year in Vilna.

On Elul 13, 5657 (1897), at the age of seventeen, he married Nehamah Dinah, the daughter of Rabbi Abraham Schneersohn, a prominent man of great scholarship and piety. She was also the grand-daughter of the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Chabad Rebbe.

During the week's celebrations that followed the wedding ceremony, Rabbi Sholom Dovber announced the founding of the famous Lubavitch Talmudic seminary, Yeshivah Tomchei Tmimim. The following year Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak was appointed to be its executive director. Under his able direction, and guided by his ever-watchful father, the Lubavitch Yeshivah flourished, developed and many branches were formed throughout Russia.

The first two decades of the twentieth century were to test the young Rabbi's unbounded energy, zeal, and ability to the full. Only the briefest mention can be made here of even the most important of the events contained in those twenty years.

As part of the strenuous efforts made to improve the economic status of the Jews in Russia, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn was delegated by his father to conduct an intensive campaign for the establishment of a textile factory in Dubrovna.

This campaign, in the year 5661 (1901), took Rabbi Schneersohn to Vilna, Lodz and Koenigsberg. He obtained the co-operation of leading Rabbis and of the famous philanthropists, the brothers Jacob and Eliezer Poliakoff, and the textile factory was duly established with some 2,000 Jewish employees.

We already know of the difficult position of the Jews under the Czarist regime and how the Lubavitcher Rebbe's continually interceded on behalf of their brethren, both with the Government and with the Court. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn undertook many such missions and often travelling to St Petersburg and Moscow.

When the Russo-Japanese war flared up in the Far East in 5664 (1904), Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn became active in the campaign inaugurated by his father to provide the Jewish soldiers on the Far East front with matzos for Pesach.

In the widespread unrest that followed in the wake of that war, a new wave of pogroms swept the Pale of Settlement. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn was sent by his father to Germany and Holland, and was successful in obtaining the intercession of prominent statesmen on behalf of Russian Jewry.

In the year 5668 (1908), he again participated in the Rabbinical convocation in Vilna. In the following year, he went to Germany to confer with Jewish leaders there. Upon his return, he took part in the preparation for the next Rabbinical convocation in the year 5670 (1910).

His energetic and far-reaching public activities, his watchful defence of the rights of Russian Jewry, and his constant fight against the local and central authorities, aroused the displeasure of the Czarist regime.

Between the years of 5662 and 5671 (1902-1911), he was arrested on four occasions. Since Government enquiries elicited nothing incriminating in his activities, he was released each time with a stern warning.

These incidents did not deter Rabbi Schneersohn from continuing his work, but spurred him to even greater efforts. In the

years 5677 (1917) and 5678 (1918) he again took a leading part in the assembly of Rabbis and laymen in Moscow and Kharkov.

Upon his father's death on Nissan 2, 5680 (1920), Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn was requested by the entire Chabad community to accept the leadership of the movement. He accepted their request and became the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

By this time conditions had changed greatly in Russia. As a result of the war and the October Revolution, Russia was in a state of constant internal strife, resulting in widespread Jewish suffering.

Due to the persecution of religious Jewry, Rabbi Schneersohn found himself facing the task of ensuring continuation of Jewish communal and religious life in Russia. He did this nearly single handedly.

He fought his struggle on two fronts, the material and the religious. Russian Jews had been reduced to the most abject poverty and suffering, and the future of traditional Judaism was gravely threatened by the policy of the G-dless Yevsektzia (The Jewish branch of the Soviet Communist Party, responsible for anti-Jewish activities.)

During this fight for the preservation of traditional Judaism in Russia against, Rabbi Schneersohn foresaw that other countries would have to supersede Russia as a great Torah center. He therefore founded a Lubavitch Talmudic seminary (Yeshivah) in Warsaw, in the year 5681 (1921), and helped many students and staff of his Russian seminary to make their way to Poland and continue their work there. The Lubavitch Yeshivah in Poland, like its counterpart in Russia, rapidly developed into a whole system of seminaries, and hundreds of students were enrolled in its many branches.

In the meantime, the Lubavitcher Rebbe fearlessly continued his work in Russia, establishing and maintaining seminaries, Torah schools and other religious institutions.

At that time Rabbi Schneersohn had his headquarters in Rostov on the River Don, but because of libellous accusations it was necessary to move from there. He took up residence in Leningrad (St Petersburg) from where he continued to direct his activities. He organized a special committee to help Jewish artisans and workers who wished to observe the Sabbath, and he sent teachers, preachers and other representatives to the most remote Jewish communities in Russia to strengthen their religious life.

Just as he had earlier foreseen the need to establish new educational institutions outside of Russia, so now he realized the necessity of organizing Chabad communities outside Russia. Therefore he formed the Agudas Chassidei Chabad of the United States of America and Canada, and maintained regular contact with his followers in the New World.

In 5687 (1927) the Rebbe founded the Lubavitch seminary in Uzbekistan, a remote province of Russia.

His stand against those who wanted to undermine the Jewish religion became even more perilous. The Yevsektzia was determined to stop him, and even resorted to intimidation

and mental torture. The following is an example of these tactics.

"One morning, when the Lubavitcher Rebbe was observing *yahrzeit* for his father, three members of the Yevsektzia rushed into his synagogue, guns in hand, to arrest him. Calmly, the Lubavitcher Rebbe finished his prayers and followed them.

Facing a council of armed and determined men, the Lubavitcher Rebbe again reaffirmed that he would not give up his religious activities, whatever threats might be made. When one of the agents pointed a gun at him, saying: "This little toy has made many a man change his mind", the Lubavitcher Rebbe calmly replied: "That little toy can intimidate only the kind of man who has many godspassions, and but one world-this world. Because I have only one G-d and two worlds, I am not impressed by your little toy."

His struggle came to a head in the summer of 5687 (1927), when the Rebbe was arrested and placed in solitary confinement in the notorious Spalerno prison in Leningrad. He was sentenced to death, but the timely intervention of leading foreign statesmen saved his life. Instead of being executed, he was banished to Kostroma, in the Urals, for three years.

Giving way to further pressure by these statesmen, the authorities decided to release the Rebbe. He was informed of this decision on his birthday, Tammuz 12. The next day he was permitted to leave and settle in the village of Malachovka, in the vicinity of Moscow. Further intervention resulted in permission for the Rebbe to leave Russia for Riga, in Latvia. The day after the holiday of Succos, together with his family and the bulk of his valuable and historic library, the Rebbe left for Riga.

Without pausing to rest, he renewed his activities, beginning by establishing a Talmudic seminary in Riga. In the years 5688 and 5689 (1928 and 1929) he ensured the provision of matzos for the Jews of Russia.

In 5689 (1929) the Rebbe visited Israel and then the United States. In New York he received a civic welcome and was granted freedom of the city. Hundreds of Rabbis and lay leaders welcomed the Rebbe and sought personal interviews with him. During this visit, he was also received by President Hoover at the White House.

Returning to Europe, he continued his various activities, but in order to have better facilities for his work he took up residence in Warsaw in 5694 (1934). The activities of the Lubavitch seminaries in Poland had by now gained considerable momentum. The central seminary in Warsaw and nearby Otwock attracted many hundreds of scholars from all parts of Poland and other countries, including the United States. Two years later the Rebbe took up residence in Otwock and directed all his activities from there.

At the outbreak of the Second World War in September, 1939 (5699), the Rebbe refused every opportunity to leave the inferno of Warsaw until he had taken care of his seminaries and done everything possible for his suffering brethren in the Polish capital. He remained there throughout the terrible siege

and bombardment of Warsaw and its final capitulation to the Nazi invaders.

Even during this time he managed to evacuate a great many of his students to safer zones, and all the American boys who had been studying at the Lubavitch seminary at Otvosk were safely transported back to their homes in the United States.

His courage and fearlessness (he had a Sukkah built and observed the mitzvah of "dwelling in the Sukkah" at the height of the bombardment) were a source of inspiration to the suffering Jewish community of Warsaw.

With the cooperation of the Department of State in Washington, the Rebbe's friends and followers worked incessantly to arrange his journey from Warsaw to New York. Finally, the Lubavitcher Rebbe and his family were offered safe conduct to Berlin and thence to Riga-Latvia (which was still neutral). Once there, the Rebbe continued to help the numerous refugees who had succeeded in escaping from Poland to Lithuania and Latvia.

On Adar Sheni 9, 5700 (March 19, 1940) the Rebbe arrived in New York on the S.S. Drottningholm. He was enthusiastically welcomed by thousands of followers and many representatives of various organizations, as well as civic authorities.

The Rebbe upon his arrival on American shores did not waste anytime in establishing a relief fund for Jewry across the sea. He contacted government officials and the state department, placing immense pressure to validate as many visas as possible as the war grew more dangerous and more gates and avenues of escapes were closed. He worked with humanitarian organizations to try and secure aid for many of the camps, prior to the knowledge of the mass genocide.

Special emphasis was placed on Jewry in the Baltic States and the Soviet Union where millions fled to safety. These refugees had no food, place to live or refuge. The Russian government was either executing them or deporting them to Siberia, where millions were vanishing. From his arrival in the United States to the end of the war, the Rebbe secretly sent food packages and religious items to these Jews through his underground operations. Simultaneously he campaigned officially with other prominent Rabbis and Jewish organizations to receive access to the Soviet Union.

The Rebbe responded to the many requests from Jewish refugee camps during the war. He shipped them vital religious items, sent his representatives to encourage them not to give up, and to bring them the message that there is a future for the Jewish nation.

Due to his incarceration, his health had been badly affected. Despite this Rabbi Schneersohn devoted himself at once to his new mission of infusing America with similar values to allow it to become a vibrant Torah centre, just like Europe and Russia.

The Central Talmudic Seminary "Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch" was soon established, and it became the forerunner of many seminaries and day schools throughout the United States. The Rebbe continued his efforts on behalf of his war-afflicted brethren overseas, and at the

same time concentrated on his avowed intention to bring about a religious revival in the United States.

After a short stay in New York City, the Rebbe moved his headquarters to Brooklyn. The first issue of the monthly Hakriah Vehakdusha made its appearance as the official organ of the World Agudas Chassidei Chabad and continued throughout the war.

During the ten years of his life in America, the influence and accomplishments of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn in strengthening Judaism, furthering Jewish education, and establishing institutions of Jewish learning were so great, that Judaism and Torah learning in America, and subsequently in other countries, took on an entirely different complexion.

In addition to the establishment of the Lubavitch Yeshivos Tomchei Tmimim in the U.S.A. and Canada, the Rebbe founded Machne Israel, Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, Beth Rivkha and Beth Sarah schools for Jewish girls, and the Kehot Publication Society, dedicated to the publication of books in the spirit of Torah.

Mesibos Shabbos groups for boys and girls were also established, to make Jewish children and teenagers conscious of their spiritual heritage. Meeting every Sabbath in a congenial atmosphere, and led by a young person of their own age and from their own neighbourhood, these children are imbued with the fundamentals of the Jewish religion, of the sanctity of the Sabbath and other precepts.

A short while before his death, the Rebbe turned his attention to the needs of North African Jewry. The foundation was laid for a network of educational institutions, including seminaries, elementary schools for young girls and boys, all of which have continued to flourish under the name "Oholei Yosef Yitzchak Lubavitch."

A similar network of educational institutions was also established in Israel, and day schools in Melbourne, Australia.

Many Jewish communal workers and leaders have taken heart from the successful work of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn and have redoubled their own efforts. New organizations and institutions have sprung up in the field of Jewish education and Sabbath observance, and their influence is making itself increasingly felt. It can be truly said that this great man was one of the pillars of world Jewry in our generation.

He passed away on the Sabbath, the tenth of Shevat, 5710 (1950), after thirty years of indefatigable endeavour as head of Chabad and a leader of world Jewry.

News of his death saddened Jews all over the world, and they mourned with a sense of personal loss the passing of such an eminent, devoted and inspiring leader. However, they find comfort in the knowledge that his spirit lives on in the unbroken chain of Chabad leadership; and that the institutions which he founded continue to thrive and expand under the leadership of his successor, the present Lubavitcher Rebbe and leader of Chabad movement, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

A Rebbe's Education

Translator's note: The following are excerpts from diary entries and transcribed talks in which the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950), describes the education he received from his father, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom DovBer Schneersohn (1860-1920)

When I was four years old, I asked my father: "Why did G-d make people with two eyes? Why not with one eye, just as they have one nose and one mouth?"

"Do you know the Alef-Bet?" asked father. "Yes."

"Then you know that there are two very similar Hebrew letters, the Shin and the Sin. Can you tell the difference between them?"

"The Shin has a dot on its right side, the Sin on its left," I replied.

Said father: "There are things which one must look upon with a right eye, with affection and empathy, and there are things to be regarded with a left eye, with indifference and detachment. On a siddur (prayer book) or on a Jew, one should look with a right eye; on a candy or toy, one should look with a left eye."

In the year 5644 [1884 -- Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak would have been 3 or 4 years old at the time] our living quarters consisted of two rooms. One room was the bedroom. In the other room, my father would sit and study with his study partner, the Chassid Rabbi Yaakov Mordechai Bezolov. In that room also stood my small bed.

In those years, I was a beautiful child with a shining face. One night, Yaakov Mordechai looked at me in my sleep and remarked to my father that the features and radiance of my face bespoke an inner purity of mind.

My father was roused with a desire to kiss me. But at that moment there arose in his mind the thought that in the Holy Temple, in addition to the korbanot, they would also bring gold, silver, etc. for the upkeep of the Temple. He decided to transform the kiss into a maamar (discourse of chassidic teaching). He then wrote the maamar titled Ma Rabbu Maasecha.

In 5652 [1892] my father gave me the manuscript as a gift and said, "This is a chassidic kiss; in time I will explain." In 5656 [1896] he told me the whole story.

...I then remembered how, as a small child, still studying with the late Reb Yekutiel the melamed, I would run to the synagogue to listen to father pray, and how heavy my heart was: Why doesn't father pray briskly, as the entire congregation does, as my uncles do? I once asked why this is so and my uncle, Rabbi Zalman Aaron told me that father cannot pronounce the Hebrew words easily, and I agonized greatly over this.

Once, I came to the synagogue. Not a soul is to be found, only father is standing, his face to the wall, praying. He is entreating G-d, he is pleading for mercy. But I do not understand: Why is he entreating more than all other worshippers? Why does he need G-d's mercy more than other people?

Suddenly, father began to sob. My heart

sank within me: Father is crying! Not a soul in the house of G-d, and father is crying. I bent an ear and I hear him say, Shma yisroel..., and he sobs, Hashem Elokeinu..., and he sobs. He then falls silent. And then again, in a powerful voice emerging from the depths of his heart, Hashem echod! in a flood of tears and a terrifying voice.

This time I could no longer contain myself. I went to my mother (may she live long) and wept: "Why does father pray longer than all the worshipers? My uncle Raza says that father has difficulty pronouncing the words. Why cannot father recite Hebrew in a proper speed? And today I saw that father is crying, come with me, my mother, I will show you that father is crying...!"

"What can I do?" responded my mother. "Can I have him sent to cheder? Go to your grandmother and ask her, perhaps she can do something about this."

I rushed to take the advice of my mother and went to my late grandmother, the saintly Rebbetzin, and posed to her my innocent question. My grandmother said to me: "Your father is a great chassid and tzaddik. With each and every word he utters, he first thinks of the meaning of the word that he is saying."

I remember how at that moment she calmed me, and how from then on my attitude towards my father changed; for I then knew that father is apart from and above other men. With his every move I saw that father is father. Father awakens in the morning and dons the tefillin and reads the Shema. Then, he goes to serve his mother tea (I also wish to do so but they prevent me by saying that I will be hurt by the boiling water).

Father washes his hands before meals not like other people. Other people pour water over their hands only twice, but father takes the pitcher with his right hand, then hands it over to his left hand, and pours three times in succession over his right hand; then he takes another pitcher of water and, using the towel to hold it in his right hand, pours three times over his left.

Every day, before the afternoon minchah prayers, father again goes to serve a cup of tea to his mother and sits there for about an hour. Everyone speaks, speaks with gusto, but father is mostly silent. Sometimes he speaks, but softly.

When I was a small child, just beginning to speak, my father said to me: "Every question you have, you should ask me."

When I was taught to recite the Modeh Ani, I was instructed to place one hand against the other and bow my head, and say Modeh Ani in this position.

When I grew a bit older, I asked my father: "Why, when we say Modeh Ani, must we place one hand against the other and bow our head?"

Father replied: "In truth, you should not be asking 'why.' But I did tell you to ask me all your questions." He then sent for the servant Reb Yosef Mordechai, a Jew of eighty years, and asked him: "How do you recite Modeh Ani in the morning?"

"I place one hand against the other and bow my head," answered Reb Yosef Mordechai.

"Why do you do so?" asked my father.

"I don't know. When I was a small child, that's what I was taught."

"You see," said father to me. "He does it so because his father taught him so. And so on back until Moses our Teacher, and until Abraham our Father who was the first Jew. One should do without asking 'why.'"

"I'm just a little boy," I said in my defence.

"We're all 'little,'" Father replied. "And when we get older, we first begin to understand that we're little."

Once, when I was about six years old, my father called me to his room and told me to make the blessing on the tzitzit. I replied that I had already made the blessing earlier in the day. "Nevertheless," said father, "say the blessing now." I refused.

Father slapped me lightly -- this was the only slap I ever received from him -- and said: "When I tell you to do something, you must obey." Tearfully, I burst out: "If one must recite the blessing for G-d, then I have already done so; and if one must recite the blessing because of your command... well..."

Father replied: "One must recite the blessing for G-d. But every father has been entrusted with the task to educate his children, and he must be obeyed."

On Rosh Hashanah of 5648 [1888], when I was a child of seven and several months, I visited my grandmother and she treated me to a melon. I went out to the yard and sat with my friends on a bench directly opposite my father's window and shared the melon with my friends.

My father called me in and said to me: "I noticed that though you shared the melon with your friends, you did not do so with a whole heart." He then explained to me at length the concept of a "generous eye" and "malevolent eye."

I was so deeply affected by my father's words that I was unable to recover for half an hour. I wept bitterly and brought up what I had eaten of the melon.

"What do you want from the boy?" asked my mother. "He's only a child!"

Father replied: "It is good this way. Now this trait will be ingrained in his character."

This is education.

For Passover of 5650 [1890] -- I was several months short of my tenth birthday at the time -- a new suit of clothes was made up for me, together with a brand new pair of shoes.

In my hometown of Lubavitch, the preparations for the festival were conducted in a meticulous and thorough manner. On the day before Passover, a strict procedure was followed: first, all chametz (leaven) was searched out and eradicated from the yard, chicken coop, and stable. The caretaker, Reb Mendel, was busy with this for a good part of the night before and followed up with a double-check in the morning. Then, the chametz was burned, following which we would go immerse ourselves in the mikvah, dress for the festival, and bake the matzat mitzvah for the seder. Finally, there were always the last-minute preparations to be taken care of.

Among these final odds and ends was a job entrusted to me: to remove the seals from the wine bottles and to partially pull out the corks. The latter was a most challenging task, for one had to take care that the metal of the corkscrew should not come in contact with the wine.

That year, I was busy at my appointed task in my father's room. I went about my work with great caution, careful not to dirty my new suit and, most importantly, not to dull the shine on my new shoes.

My father noticed what was uppermost in my mind and said to me: "The Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi] cites the following metaphor: A great nobleman sits at a table laden with all sorts of gourmet dishes and delicacies. Under the table lies a dog, gnawing a bone. Can you imagine the nobleman climbing down from his chair and joining the dog under the table to chew on a luscious bone?"

My father's words so affected me that I was ashamed to even look at my new clothes.

This is education.

It was the summer of 5656 [1896], and father and I were strolling in the fields of Balivka, a hamlet near Lubavitch. The grain was near to ripening, and the wheat and grass swayed gently in the breeze.

Said father to me: "See G-dliness! Every movement of each stalk and grass was included in G-d's Primordial Thought of Creation, in G-d's all-embracing vision of history, and is guided by Divine providence toward a G-dly purpose."

Walking, we entered the forest. Engrossed in what I had heard, excited by the softness and seriousness of father's words, I absent-mindedly tore a leaf off a passing tree. Holding it a while in my hands, I continued my thoughtful walking, occasionally tearing small pieces of leaf and casting them to the winds.

"The Holy Ari," said father to me, "says that not only is every leaf on a tree a creation invested with Divine life, created to specific purpose within G-d's intent in creation, but also that within each and every leaf there is a spark of a soul that has descended to earth to find its correction and fulfillment."

"The Talmud," father continued, "rules that, 'A man is always responsible for his actions, whether awake or asleep.' The difference between wakefulness and sleep is in the inner faculties of man, his intellect and emotions. The external faculties function equally well in sleep, only the inner faculties are confused. So dreams present us with contradictory truths. A waking man sees the real world, a sleeping man does not. This is the deeper significance of wakefulness and sleep: when one is awake one sees Divinity; when asleep, one does not."

"Nevertheless, our sages maintain that man is always responsible for his actions, whether awake or asleep. Only this moment we have spoken of Divine providence, and, unthinkingly, you tore off a leaf, played with it in your hands, twisting, squashing and tearing it to pieces, throwing it in all directions."

"How can one be so callous towards a creation of G-d? This leaf was created by the Almighty towards a specific purpose and is imbued with a Divine life-force. It has a body and it has its life. In what way is the 'I' of this leaf inferior to yours?"