



Unity Among Jews

When we are united with each other, we are united with G-d.

Written by the holy tzaddik

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Section 1: The Real Reason Why Jews Must Work on Getting Along

Why is it important for Jews to get along?

You may say, “Because it is terrible for Jews to fight Jews.” You would be correct, but not entirely. You may add, “When Jews fight each other, their enemies can then easily defeat them!” Again, you are correct, history has proven you right, but there is more to it.

You may even explain, “It is a terrible sin for Jews to wage battle against each other. Furthermore, in the heat of hate people display horrible behavior.” You are 100% correct. For a Jew to hate another Jew is a violation of the Torah and the behavior which results from intolerance is a great stain of dishonor upon our people.

But it goes much, much deeper, That Jews love each other, respect one another and tolerate each other’s differences is critical for the wellbeing of the world. In fact, it is a critical condition for the very existence of the world. Without unity among Jews, the universe has no purpose.

Why? The answer lies in understanding the purpose of the world and how the Jewish soul fulfills it.

Man's Soul – A Spark of G-dliness

G-d creates a universe. Each creation, infinite in its complexity, comes into being, one by one. First light, then the separation of sky and earth, then the splitting the ocean to create dry land, and vegetation. How did G-d bring all of this into being? Simply, by uttering a command. G-d said, “There shall be light!” and light came to be. G-d said, “The waters shall split!” and the sky and oceans formed.

But how was Adam (man) formed? Listen to the Torah's narrative. “And the Lord, G-d formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living soul.” Man's body was formed from the dust; his soul from G-d's breath.

When you blow, what comes out? Air from inside your own body. Although that air was once part of the atmosphere around you, it is now a part of you. So when you blow air into a balloon, a small bit of yourself is now in the balloon.

So when G-d blew a soul into Man, where did that soul come from? From G-d Himself. Unlike human beings, whose breath is formed from the environment around us, G-d blows from His own inner essence.

You are starting to get the idea. Yes, the soul of man is a spark of G-dliness itself. Wow.

Why Did G-d Create the World?

Since G-d was missing nothing before the universe came into being, why did He create the world?

The Rabbi tell us that G-d is filled with love and wanted to share His goodness with His creations. We understand goodness as physical and emotional satisfaction, yet there is something, which, while encompassing these, goes way beyond, to the level of the sublime. The greatest goodness that exists is to be close to G-d. The pleasure of closeness to G-d is beyond our imagination, for we have never fully experienced it, but occasionally, when we experience a tiny drop of this closeness, we reach a level of euphoria. All other pleasures are dwarfed in comparison.

Man was created for a lofty, cosmic mission. As the only created being which possesses a spark of G-dliness, he was charged with making this world G-dly, so that G-d Himself could dwell in the world and be close to His creations.

G-d created the world for this purpose, but left it for Man to fulfill it.¹

The Unity of Jewish Souls

My soul is G-dly, your soul is G-dly. G-d is One.

¹ If you are alert, you may notice us switching from talking about Man to discussing Jews. This is because the vast majority of Adam's descendants ignored their mission and focused on gratifying their basest, vulgar instincts. Therefore, G-d transferred the mission of mankind to the few human beings that remained loyal to Man's mission, and would transmit that mission to their descendants; Abraham, Isaac and finally Jacob. Jacob's descendants, the Jewish people are now the heirs of man's mission. Their souls are G-dly and their actions can bring G-dliness into this world.

Thus, if we both possess G-dly souls, we are one unit.

The collective Jewish soul forms a single cosmic anatomy, similar to the anatomy of a human being, with each soul serving as a different part of this anatomy.

On a soul level, we are intertwined just as my tiny left toe is connected to my right ear. Can a right and left hand fight with each other? Impossible! Why? Because they are not separate beings, they are but two different dimensions of the same body!

Your soul and mine are connected in the same way. Can I be happy while hurting you? Can a hand be happy while it is sticking a needle into the cheek with which it shares a body?

How Is It Possible for Jews to Feel Disconnected From Each Other?

If you see one Jew fighting against another, you must marvel, “How is that possible? Their souls are intertwined; they are one unit!

The only way it can be possible for Jew to fight Jew is if they disconnect themselves from their G-dly essence. Only if we ignore our souls, and function as physical, animalistic beings, can we fight. Yes, tigers will brawl to death over a carcass; there is no union of souls between them. And animalistic human beings will feel no connection as well.

When two Jews fight each other in any manner, be it physical, verbal or in any other way, at that moment they have shut G-d out of their lives.

The Cosmic Tragedy of Infighting Among Jews

The Jew is tasked with bringing G-d into this world. By fostering hate between himself and his fellow Jew, he is pushing G-d out of his life. When Jew fights Jew, he casts the world into the inky, bleak night of G-dlessness.

Fighting with a Jew isn't merely one of the many forms of sin. Discord between Jews frustrates G-d's very purpose of creation.

Jews fighting with Jews is a tragedy of cosmic proportions.

How Can We Get Ourselves to Love Our Fellow Jews?

You Have it in You!

Who is G-d? Describe Him to me.

Obviously this is impossible. G-d is too lofty for us to even begin imagining that we can grasp His essence. However, the Torah reveals His traits so that, by copying them, we can form ourselves into G-dly beings, in conformance with our G-dly soul.

“G-d is compassionate and gracious [even to the unworthy], long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. He maintains mercy for

thousands [of generations], forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.²”

Our Sages exhort us to follow in G-d’s ways, “Just as He is compassionate, so you be compassionate. Just as He does kindness even to those who don’t deserve it, so you should do kindness even to the unworthy”.

It is the natural condition of a Jew to be benevolent and caring. Jews naturally want to help each other and speak kindly to each other. It is not natural for Jews to be brazen and fight-mongering. And of course, it is antithetical to the very being of a Jew to ever cause pain to his fellow in any way, be it emotionally, physically, financially, etc.

²Shemos 34:6-7

To act G-dly is to remain true to our inner essence, to our G-dly soul. The soul is naturally loving, kind and compassionate; we just have to be careful not to shut out its call.

Dan Lekaf Zchus – Judging Jews Favorably

You many look around and see many Jews behaving in a way of which you disapprove, or even more disturbing, in a way of which the Torah disapproves. You may think, "How can they cheat? What a violation of the Torah! They are robbers"! Or "Look at these people (or perhaps don't). They dress immodestly! I must hate them, I must denigrate them. I have to shout at them and chase them"!

While it is fully understood how wrong behavior can arouse righteous ire, it is critical to

stop ourselves before going too far and, G-d forbid, feeling hatred towards the perpetrator of misdeeds. But how can we prevent this? How can we love a person who is committing sins?

The Torah gives us the formula for doing so: judge others favorably.

Before beginning your righteous rant, stop. Think. We humans are so complex. Can there be any reason why this individual did what he did other than the fact that he is evil?

Perhaps this person was tired, irritated or in pain? Perhaps he is being misguided? Perhaps she is dealing with unbearable pressure at home, be it a sick child, an absent spouse, or a traumatic childhood background? What if the reason he said what he said was because he is very financially stressed?

People who are misbehaving can constitute a physical or spiritual danger, and so there are times when we must distance ourselves from them. But even as we do so, we can try to understand where they are coming from and develop feelings of sympathy towards them.

Contemplate the Greatness of A Jew

If you find yourself still struck with a negative feeling or thought towards another Jew, there is an additional solution. Contemplate the greatness of a Jew.

The soul of a Jew is referred to as a “child of G-d.³” A child of G-d! Would you, could you, ever think negatively about a child of G-d?

Our Sages compare a single Jewish soul to an entire universe. The greatness of a Jew is unfathomable to the human mind. Our imagination falls short of contemplating the vastness of the Milky Way galaxy, let alone of the entire universe!

A Jew, even a very sinful one, is endowed with the ability to do teshuvah, to return to G-d. No matter how many times a Jew commits a sin, and no matter how grievous that sin may be, the internal core of a Jewish soul remains pure.

³ This idea is deduced from the verse, “You are children of Hashem, your G-d.” (Devarim 14:1)

From this spark of purity, even the most wicked criminal can rejuvenate himself.

And when you think about it, even a low-level Jew is filled with greatness. Our Sages compare a so-called “empty Jew” to a pomegranate; the pomegranate is filled with juicy seeds, the “empty Jew” is filled with the many mitzvos he has done in his lifetime despite his diminutive spiritual stature.

A Jewish soul is G-dly. That means that Hashem is with every Jew you will meet today. So love every Jew, admire the holy soul within him. You will never meet an unimportant Jew.

Should Differences Divide?

For as long as there have been Jews, there have been differences between them. Jacob had twelve sons, each unique, none the same as his

brother. However, these tribes formed a single nation, united in loyalty to G-d's Torah.

It was always a challenge for Jews to get along, to see themselves as one people, bound by their intertwined G-dly souls. The exile, which dispersed Jews to many diverse countries, intensified this challenge.

Two-thousand years ago Jews were already living in countries as diverse as Rome, Babylon and Yemen. The past thousand years have seen Jews divided by the borders of France, Germany, England, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Hungary etc., etc. as well as Turkey, Spain, North Africa, Persia, and many others. Living among gentiles, we have absorbed much of their culture.

Today there are Lithuanian Jews, Polish Jews, Hungarian Jews, Turkish Jews, Syrian Jews, etc. It is a challenge for each of these groups of Jews to find common ground with the other. They may feel estranged and, oh, so different! This feeling of estrangement can even lead to hatred between different groups of Jews, G-d Forbid.

How is that? A Hungarian Jew is essentially the same as a Polish Jew! Can there be a sense of alienation between Yemenite Jews and Syrian Jews? All Jews share a cosmic soul! Why would you find animosity between them?

The answer is that when a Jew resides in exile, a little bit of the non-Jews surrounding him rubs off. When the Lithuanian Jew feels disconnected from the Moroccan Jew, it is not the Jew who feels disconnected from the Jew.

When the Hungarian Jew feels hatred, G-d forbid, to the Polish Jew, it is the Hungarian non-Jewishness that has attached itself to the Hungarian Jew that hates the Polish non-Jewishness that has attached itself to the Polish Jew.

But, fellow Jewish brothers and sisters, it is time to put these silly differences aside. The exile is rapidly drawing to a close, Mashiach is extremely near. Don't you see how Divine Providence is bringing Jews back to Eretz Yisrael, to the Jewish land? It's time to let go of the differences formed between us during our long exile and learn to see each other as we truly are – holy Jewish souls.

You think your culture is superior and therefore only your approach to Torah is the correct one? That's childish! G-d values every

type of Jew, Hashem does not consider you nearer to Him than the next Jew. All Jewish souls are equally children of G-d. Stay far away from people who convince you that there is only one correct approach to the Torah and that we must fight those different than us. If you listen to them, you will destroy yourself very quickly.

Oftentimes, people use loyalty to Torah and Hashem as an excuse for infighting. Yet how can they claim that they are loyal to Torah when they are behaving in direct opposition to its chief directives, namely, to live in peace and love with all Jews?

To feel superior to another Jew is both wrong and egoistical. G-d hates divisiveness. We have to learn to love every Jew; there are many

correct approaches to G-d.⁴ What is definitely wrong is to deride any style of serving G-d which doesn't dovetail with yours.

Pros and Cons – Does It Pay to Remain Divided?

We have explained how critical it is to the existence of the world that Jews be united as one. We have given practical tools as to how to achieve unity and love. We have disproved the myth that differences must divide. Now we will explain that it doesn't pay to be divided. None

⁴This, of course, is only referring to Jews loyal to Torah. Reform, Conservative, Open Orthodoxy or any approach which denies the Divinity of either the written or the oral Torah have no validity at all. Even though their adherents must be drawn close so that they can return to G-d, these ideologies must be shunned and ostracized.

of us wants to suffer, but by perpetuating disputes we, sure that we will.

For a starter, the negative energy generated by animosity eats away at the emotional core of people. Our sages explain that hating people can cause a person “to go out of his world.”⁵ A hater goes crazy in a certain sense because he can’t think straight. He becomes like a drunk. A hater enters a state where he’s capable of doing the worst things, even murder.

Furthermore, hurting another Jew either physically, emotionally, financially or in any other way, brings with it terrible punishments. When someone hurts another person, he is hurt in return; in the exact manner in which he had harmed another, he himself is harmed.

⁵Mishnayos, Avos 2:112:16

The Torah refers to a Jew who merely lifts his arm to hurt his fellow Jew as evil, all the more so is one who actually strikes his fellow, G-d forbid.⁶

G-d doesn't take verbal abuse lightly either. The Torah considers verbal abuse to be a terrible sin which G-d does not overlook.

When groups attack each other, they chase the Shechina away; G-d distances Himself from us. Without G-d's protective presence, the Jewish people are easy prey for their many vicious and powerful enemies.

On the other hand, when Jews are united, they can never be destroyed. No suicide bomber can detonate his bomb, no stabber can unsheathe his knife, no arsonist ignite his match or U.N

⁶ Sanhedrin 58:

official pass resolutions against us. There is only one solution to Jewish security: Jewish unity.

Aren't we suffering enough? Don't you think there are enough sick children, bereft women, orphaned children? Don't you think it is time to bring G-d's presence back to us? Let's start loving each other, respecting each other's differences, and bond in brotherly love.

Strife Within the Family

After reading this essay, we are all ready to make a metamorphosis in our lives, to completely overhaul our attitude. We now view all Jews as worthy of love and respect and will not foster ill will between ourselves and members of other groups. Global peace and harmony, here we come!

Be careful! In your rush out the door to solve the world's problems, don't trip over your close family members. Family is not the exception to the rule; it is with our immediate families that we begin the process of fostering love and brotherhood.

Because we live in close proximity with our spouses, siblings and children, it is very common to disagree with them, to be irritated by them and then to lash out, hurting those closest to us emotionally or physically. We may not take our family members' feelings seriously, but our Sages certainly did. Hurting the people closest to us is a grave sin which is not ignored by G-d.

When a couple marries, they usually discover pretty quickly that they are very different from each other. They realize that the family they

married into has vastly different views regarding many core issues. That is when we are presented with the golden opportunity of creating unity between opposites. The truest form of peace is when people who oppose each other naturally overcome their prejudices and work to come together in mutual understanding. When a family lives in loving unity, they can raise healthy children.

It is also beautiful when siblings and in-laws live in peace and harmony.

Closely related to the topic of peace within the family is maintaining good relations between neighbors. People living in close proximity need to really be committed to maintaining the peace between themselves if they are to live in harmony. We have to give and

give in, be sympathetic to their needs, and waive our rights.

Do Real Teshuva

Until now, we were petty; we thought negatively about each other, we were divided. It is time to repent, to develop into more spiritual people, to return to G-d. How?

Start by talking to G-d as if He were your good friend, sitting right near you or walking along with you, listening intently to you with compassion, patience and perfect understanding. Do you know why you should talk to G-d this way? Because He really is.

You will never have a better, more attentive and loyal friend than G-d.

Formal prayer is a basic part of being a Jew. We have to recite the words of the Siddur with focus and emotion. But prayer only *begins* with the prayer book; it most definitely doesn't end there.

If we are to become G-dly people, if we are to return to G-d, we will have to develop a real relationship with Him. And the way to do so, is by talking to Him. "G-d my ankle hurts, can you help me. G-d, isn't that a beautiful tree! Oh, G-d! I love pink! You created the color in order to delight me. So that must mean that You love me and the colors I love as well. G-d I'm worried about my business..." and on and on and on...

Shut your smart phone. Do you really think your whatsapp group cares about what you made for supper? Stop sharing with social

media and don't chatter all day with your friends. Speak to G-d! When you talk to G-d it makes very little difference what you are actually saying. Just tuning into G-d and this itself will elevate you and lift you. "G-d, please help me remember my shopping list. I need potatoes, cabbage and pasta...Oh, G-d, I forgot what I need to buy..."

Prayer is very valuable to G-d because it brings us closer to Him. Therefore, if we pray for something we may get it, even though we do not deserve it, so great is G-d's desire that we connect to Him on the most intimate level.

When you develop a true connection to G-d through constant conversations with Him, you will find the pettiness which results in squabbling way beneath you. A person filled

with the spiritual light and joy of being in close proximity to the Divine, has no place within himself to care about the irritating habits of those around him.

Practical Pointers: Take it One Step at a Time

Be very careful never, ever, to abuse another person physically, emotionally, financially, or in any other way. When you feel a mean emotion arising, connect yourself to your internal core which is full of love, goodness and compassion. Help the person who is bothering you and you will then be filled with compassion towards him/her.

Helping a Jew presents one with an unbelievable opportunity.

Because a Jewish soul is G-dly, helping a Jew is like helping Hashem. How we might wish to

help our beloved Creator! But He is all powerful and we completely depend on Him, so what can we do for Him? But there is a way. In His kindness, Hashem surrounded us with people who need us, and when we help a fellow Jew, it is as if we helped Hashem Himself.

Get used to saying nice things about Jews. Praising a Jew is like praising G-d because Jewish souls are G-dly. The opposite is also true. Be careful never to denigrate a Jew.⁷ Don't focus on the imperfections or weaknesses of those around you. Find the hidden goodness in every Jew - and there is so much goodness to find.

Keep in mind that Hashem is here. He is at your side and there is no power affecting your

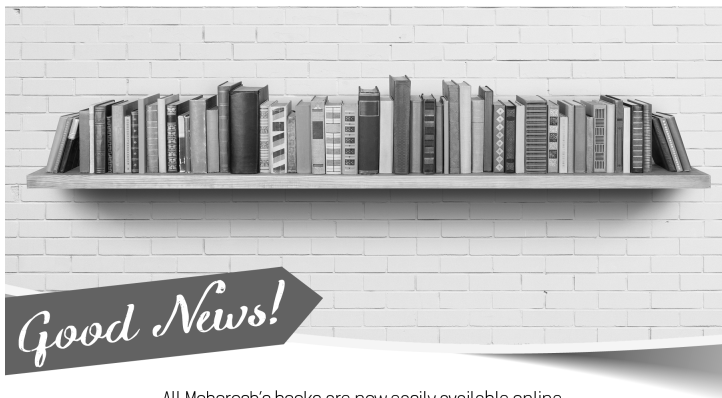
⁷ Midrash Tanchuma Vayechi 5

life but His will. Hashem wants us to recognize Him and to remember Him. When we live like this, there is no room for the pettiness of quarrels.

Keep in mind the tremendous importance of peace. The Hebrew word for peace is “shalom.” Shalom is so important that it is one of the names of G-d!⁸ Our sages also teach that G-d did not create a more beautiful character trait than Shalom.

If we want a strong relationship with Hashem and to have pure trust in Him, we have to work on being peaceful people. Then, we will be able to become close to G-d. If you do this, you will live a life of bliss in this world.

⁸ Vayikra Rabba 9:9



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