

## **LEARNING In Honour of ZALMAN's 2<sup>nd</sup> Yartzeit**

**כ"ב تمוז - July 14<sup>th</sup> 2020**

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ח'ים שניאור זלמן ע"ה בן יבלח"ט בצלאל הכהן Zalman Borenstein

Zalman Borenstein: a chossid, a yerei shomayim, a lamdan. A Chayo"l in Tzivos Hashem-a general in fact. And a chayol in the Rebbe's army of Shluchim.

Zalman grew up on Shlichus in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, just outside of Toronto. He was proud to be a shliach, to represent the Rebbe and teach Torah and Chassidus to the people in his community. He was his father's assistant in shul and his mother's assistant in Hebrew school. He was a chossid, making sure to encourage others in every mitzva but especially fond of the Rebbe's mivtzoyim. Even when he was sick at the end of his life, mivtzoyim was top of his mind. He once had to go to the hospital on yomtov. It was sukkos and Zalman really did not want to travel on yomtov. As the Rebbe's Chassidim, his parents took along their lulav and esrog 'just in case'. They got to the hospital and Zalman found out that his doctor was a Yid and asked him to shake Lulav and esrog. It was the first time in many years that the doctor had done so. Turning to his parents, Zalman said- it was worth coming to the hospital just so the doctor could bentsch lulav and esrog.

He had tremendous yiras shomayim. He was careful to practice what he learned is the proper hanhaga of a yiddishe boy.

And Zalman was a lamdan. Above everything else, he loved learning Torah. Torah learning was something he loved and insisted on doing even when he was too sick to be able to hold the sefer and read it for himself. He would have his parents, his friends or even his nurses read to him and learn with him at every possible moment. Zalman was excited to finally be able to participate in Chidon and, despite all the physical challenges, Zalman earned a plaque & Medal-he scored one the highest of his entire grade on the tests. There was NOTHING that stood in the way of Zalman learning Torah.

Zalman passed away two years ago today, on כ"ב تمוז תשע"ח at 9.5 years old. He was a Chayo"l in Tzivos Hashem until the very last moment. His Ahavas Yisroel, his love of doing mitzvos and teaching others, and his love of Torah are something each of us can take to heart and try to improve on. We are certain he is before the כבוד ה'כבוד pleading with Hashem to end this long גלות NOW!

לע"נ ח'ים שניאור זלמן בן יבלח"ט בצלאל הכהן

# Ahavas Yisroel

The *Alter Rebbe* writes in his siddur just as we are ready to begin deveining: “It is proper to say before *davening*: I hereby accept upon myself to fulfil the mitzvah to love your fellow as yourself. Although this is a great mitzvah, what does this have to do with *davening*? and why is this the way we begin the day?

First let understand, how can one truly love a fellow Yid?

There are two points to consider in answering this question:

1) The Jewish people are compared to a human body. Each of us is one part of this body. Just as the foot needs the head to tell it to move, the head needs the foot to take it where it wants to go. Each part is necessary to make a perfect body. So too, although our purposes in life may differ, we each contribute our specific purpose to the Jewish People as a whole, making each one of us equally important and valuable.

One doesn’t love his foot more than his hand, or his liver more than his heart. Each part of one’s body (every Jew) is needed equally in order to function properly.

2) Another perspective; the Jewish nation can be compared to straw . One straw on its own can easily be broken or blown away, but bound together, the combined weight and strength of the bundle makes it unbreakable. So too, when the Jewish people are bound together, they can resist any destructive forces .

We can now better understand “*Hareini Mikabel*”: Before we start our days job, our specific purpose, we need to be reminded that for us to succeed, we need to be united with the “rest of our body”

Indeed since *Hashem* is our father, we share a bond as brothers. We must therefore see every Jew as our brother, a blood-related family member.

Before we *daven*, before we ask for our own personal needs, we want *Hashem* to be happy with us, the happier He is with us, the quicker our prayers will be answered, therefore we proclaim our unity and our bond to each other before we pray. As in the analogy even when children aren’t always doing what their parents ask of them, but when their parents see how special they treat each other they often ignore the other misdeeds. When, *Hashem*, as our father, sees us sharing this bond and being united it actually brings Him much pleasure, and in turn He sends us much blessings.

Until now we have explained *Ahavas Yisroel* on two levels:

1) It is for our own benefit, we can only do our job properly if we work together, each adding our part, like all the limbs of a body working in sync..

2) We are like brothers and Hashem is our father and we want to give him the satisfaction of having “unity in the family”, through that Hashem will answer our prayers.

Let us look at a deeper dimension to this Mitzvah, by first understanding a couple questions:

In the famous story of Hillel - when the gentile asked to be taught the entire Torah - while standing on one foot , his reply was “What you don’t like - don’t do to others, This is the whole Torah while the rest is commentary; go and learn it.” This statement is puzzling, It’s understandable if you tell me that it’s the basis for all laws pertaining to man and his fellow, but what does it have to do with the rest of the Torah, especially **בֵין אָדָם לַמֶּלֶךְ** - Between man and Hashem?

Similarly regarding the encampment of the *Yidden* Before *Mattan Torah*, it is described by the Torah as, “**וַיַּחֲנֹן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל - כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּלֹבֶב**” -There was a complete unity between Jews, this preparation was so essential that our *Chachamim* tell us that it was a necessary prerequisite, and without it Hashem would not have given the Torah. Now, what is so essential about unity, *Ahavas Yisroel* , that not only is it the basis, but is actually the “source”, in effect, of the entire Torah!?

*Chassidus* explains that everything in this world is created with a body and a soul – its G-dly life force within it. Our job is to reveal how the essence of every single creation is the G-dliness within it. This is hinted in *Rashi* on the First word in Torah, which tells us that Hashem created the world for the Jews and For Torah, that through Jews fulfilling the Torah we reveal the true nature of this world.

This is accomplished through the fulfilment of the mitzvos, for when we do a mitzvah, take an *esrog* for example, we are, in effect, proclaiming to the *esrog* “your physicality is not what I am now focusing on, I am only utilizing you because Hashem commands us to use you as a mitzvah for *Sukkos*”, thereby showing that it’s the G-dliness of the *esrog* that is the true essence of this object.

However, sometimes we may forget that this is why we are doing the mitzvos, it may become so habitual to us that we don’t pay attention to the meaning behind it. This is why Hashem gave us a mitzvah where it is IMPOSSIBLE to achieve, unless you have actively “torn away” the body, and are focusing solely on the soul. This is the Mitzvah of “*Ahavas Yisroel*”. The only way to truly love someone else exactly as ourselves, is if they actually are one and the same as ourselves. As long as we are dealing with two different people it is impossible to love the other exactly as we love ourselves. You may be able to be nice to him, care for him, even love him to the extent of a brother, but to love him as your very own self is impossible. Unless we come to recognize the *Neshama*. The *Neshama*, a piece of Hashem, of every Jew is equal and the same, actually in its source it is ONE. We all have that same “piece” of G-d within us, that is the *Neshama*. After we realize that it is the piece of Hashem within us that makes us special, we can come to love every Jew for their *Neshama*. So by loving another Jew you actually are loving your very own self.

Now we can understand the importance of this mitzvah, it is actually the basis and foundation of the entire Torah. The whole point of the *Torah* and mitzvos is to reveal the soul, the G-dliness within everything and the one mitzvah which personifies this is the mitzvah of *Ahavas Yisroel*. Therefore, before Hashem even gave us the Torah he had to “test” us to see if we would be

able to accomplish this task, so He required us to try to achieve this unity and only once we showed we can be united did He give us the Torah.

We are now in the three weeks, which was the period in time of the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdosh and the subsequent exile. We are all waiting impatiently for Moshiach to come and the rebuilding of our third and eternal Beis Hamikdosh.

Therefore, we must first see what caused the destruction and correct it, in order to bring Moshiach.

The Gemara tells us, that the second Beis Hamikdosh was destroyed because there was *Sinas Chinam* – baseless hatred amongst the Jewish people.

So, if we want to get rid of the Golus, we have to have “*Ahavas Chinam*” – baseless love. We have to love every Jew, no matter what.

Why does hate cause Golus and destruction, and love bring rebuilding and Moshiach?

A father who has many children wants his children to be united. When they are together and nice to each other, he wants to be with them and will overlook their faults and give them what they want. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. When children are fighting with each other, it causes the father pain and he doesn’t find it pleasant to be with them.

The same is true of Hashem, when His children – all of us – are united, then He wants to rest his Divine Presence amongst us in the Beis Hamikdosh. He overlooks our faults and gives us the thing we want – Moshiach. In fact it is a direct cause, when we overlook our fellow *yiddens*’ faults we cause Hashem to do just the same!

A step further: *Ahavas Yisroel* is not just a way to bring Moshiach, and the Beis Hamikdosh closer. In the last moments of Golus we want to “Live with Moshiach”. In the time of Moshiach there will be no wars, no fighting, no jealousy, and no competition. “Living with Moshiach” means that we start to act in that manner. We live in pure *Achdus* – unity – and have *Ahavas Yisroel*, just like it will be in the times of Moshiach.

Looking Deeper: The *Ahavas Yisroel* of Moshiach’s times is a greater and more complete type of *Ahavas Yisroel*. *Ahavas Yisroel* as we know it, is to love every Jew as yourself. How? Since the main part of our existence is our *Neshama*, a part of Hashem, we are all one. We love our fellow Jews as ourselves because they are a part of us spiritually. Our bodies however, seem to be separate entities.

When Moshiach comes he will reveal the presence of Hashem in everything. We will be able to see how all the Jewish people are like one person, with one body and one *Neshama*.

This is the real *Ahavas Yisroel* and unity that we need to experience now in order to “Live with Moshiach”. Through this, Hashem will let Moshiach be revealed, He will see that we are ready for this great moment! He will open our eyes and the eyes of the world to see that the true existence of everything is really Hashem. We will march together as one person out of Golus right now!