

FAMILY BLISS

How can we create a warm and healthy home?

Uncover a gold mine of clarity on family relationships, domestic harmony, education, and creating a healthy home environment.

THE JEWISH HOME
Boris Shapiro, b. 1968,
oil on canvas

I. INTRODUCTION

This lesson explores the Torah teachings that the Rebbe frequently highlighted as the keys to enhancing and strengthening family relationships.



EXERCISE 2.1

Identify attitudes, behaviors, and values that sustain and fortify harmony within a family:

Attitudes

Behaviors

Values



TEXT 1

Always Room to Grow

The Rebbe, English correspondence,
22 Menachem Av, 5737 [August 6, 1977]

I received some information about the relationship at home, but I do not know to what extent it reflects the actual situation. Hence I want to convey to you some thoughts in the light of what the relationship should be according to the Shulchan Aruch—the Jew's practical guide to life. If the relationship is, indeed, in keeping with it, the purpose of this letter will be to strengthen and deepen it, as there is always room for improvement in all matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and Mitzvos. On the other hand, if it is not quite what it should be, I trust that, since the Torah is surely “a lamp unto your feet,” you will bring it up to the desired level and you will do it with joy and gladness of heart.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE

The Rebbe's correspondence includes many thousands of letters in English. Dr. Nissan Mindel, a member of the Rebbe's secretariat, was responsible for these letters. The Rebbe would dictate his responses to Dr. Mindel, who would draft letters for the Rebbe's review and editing. It is not always clear whether the letters we possess are Mindel's initial drafts, or the final version authorized by the Rebbe to be sent to the recipient.



**LIGHTING THE LAMPS,
EVE OF THE SABBATH**

Simeon Solomon, wood-engraved illustration from sketch, for article, “Jews in England,” in *Once a Week* magazine, U.K., 1862

II. FAMILIES: A DIVINE NEED

In today's individualized and distracted society, many families lack cohesion—with unfortunate results. Foundational to correcting this is examining the Torah's profound teachings on the sanctity of the family unit.



TEXT 2

Living Together, Drifting Apart

The Rebbe, *Torat Menachem* 5734:2, pp. 152–154

שְׁאֶחָד הָעֵינִינִים שֶׁבָּהֶם תָּלוּי קִיּוּם שֶׁל עַם
בְּכָלֵל, וְעַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִיָּחָד - שֶׁלֹּדְאֲבוּנָנוּ
הַזֶּנַח לְגִמְרֵי - הֲרִי זֶה קִיּוּם הַמְשֻׁפָּחָה.

אֶפִּילוּ אִלּוּ שֶׁמִּשְׁתַּדְּלִים בְּאַמֶּת לְהִתְנַהֵּג עַל פִּי דֶרֶךְ
הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה, הֵן בְּנוֹגֵעַ לְלִמּוּד הַתּוֹרָה, לְקַבֵּעַ שְׁעוּרִים
בַּתּוֹרָה, וְהֵן בְּנוֹגֵעַ לְקִיּוּם הַמִּצְוֹת, לְקִיָּמָם בְּהַדּוּר, וְגַם
אִלּוּ שֶׁלֹּא רוֹצִים לוֹתֵר חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם אֶפִּילוּ עַל יְהוּדֵי
שְׁנֵמֶצָא בְּרַחוּק הַכִּי גָדוֹל בְּרוּחָנוּיּוֹת, וּמִשְׁתַּדְּלִים עַד כְּדֵי
מִסִּירוֹת נֶפֶשׁ לְהִתְעַסֵּק גַּם עִמּוֹ - חֶסֶר אֶצְלָם (עַל כָּל
פָּנִים בְּמִדָּה חֲשׁוּבָה, וְעַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה שָׂאִין זֶה בְּמִדָּה
הַצְרִיכָה לְהִיּוֹת) בְּעֵינֵי הַחֲזָקָה הַמְשֻׁפָּחָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, וְהֵינּוּ,
שֶׁאֶפִּילוּ כֹּאשֶׁר הָאָב וְהָאֵם וְהַיְלָדִים הוֹלְכִים כָּלֵם בְּדֶרֶךְ
אַחַת, בְּדֶרֶךְ הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה - אֵין זֶה בְּאֶפֶן שֶׁהִתְלִיכָה
בְּדֶרֶךְ הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה הִיא גַם בְּתוֹר מְשֻׁפָּחָה . . .

שְׁרוּאִים בִּפְעֵל אֶת הַפֶּה הַבְּנִי רַחֲמָנָא לְצִלוֹ,
שֶׁנֶּעֱשֶׂה מִזֶּה שֶׁהַבְּנִים וְהַבָּנוֹת וְהָאָב וְהָאֵם
הֵם אֲרֻבָּעָה עוֹלָמוֹת בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמָם.

TORAT MENACHEM

A Hebrew translation of the transcripts of the Rebbe's talks. This work also comprehensively cross-references and footnotes the material. As of 2023, more than 120 volumes have appeared in this series, covering the years 1950–1975 and 1981–1992. The Rebbe did not edit or review these publications for accuracy.

One of the elements crucial for any nation, especially the Jewish nation, is the preservation of the family unit. Unfortunately, this institution has been utterly neglected.

The focus on the family unit is lacking—somewhat or significantly—even among those who genuinely try to follow a Torah lifestyle. They set aside time for Torah study, fulfill *mitzvot* meticulously, and even act with self-sacrifice to influence Jews who are spiritually disengaged. Yes, the father, mother, and children are walking a single path, the path of Torah and *mitzvot*; nevertheless, they do not walk this path *as a family*. . . .

We readily observe the regrettable effects of the father, mother, sons, and daughters living in four distinct “worlds.”



ITTY AINSWORTH
WITH THE REBBE
Chana Laber, oil on
canvas, 1989, USA



EXERCISE 2.2

1. What adverse outcomes might arise from a lack of family unity?

2. What elements could contribute to a family's difficulty in maintaining cohesion?



TEXT 3

Counting Families

The Rebbe, *Torat Menachem* 5734:2, p. 153

מְצִינֵנוּ בְּנוֹגֵעַ לְמִנְיַן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁנוֹסָף עַל הַזְכָּרַת הַמִּסְפָּר
שֶׁל כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: "שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אָלֶף וּשְׁלֹשָׁת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמִשָּׁה
מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים" (בְּמִדְבָּר א, מו), מִדְּגִישָׁה הַתּוֹרָה, וְחוֹזֶרֶת
זֹאת בְּכָל שִׁבְט בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ, שֶׁאֵפֶן הַמִּנְיָן הָיָה "לְמִשְׁפְּחוֹתָם
לְבֵית אֲבוֹתָם" (שָׁם, א, ב), הֵינּוּ, שֶׁמִּנּוּ אוֹתָם בְּתוֹר מְשֻׁפָּחָה.

When G-d counted the Jewish people, in addition to the census of the entire nation equaling 603,550 (NUMBERS 1:46), the Torah emphasizes and repeats that its members were counted "according to their families to the houses of their fathers" (NUMBERS 1:2), meaning they were counted as family units.



TEXT 4

The Divine Name

The Rebbe, *ibid.*

וביותר מדגש ענין זה על פי תורת הסוד - כמבאר
בקבלה ובחסידות בארקה, בנוגע למצות פריה ורביה
שצריך להיות לכל הפחות בן ובת, שהרמז על זה
הוא שבשם הוי' יש י"ה ו"ה: י"ה - נקראים בקבלה
בשם "אבא ואמא" . . . ואותיות ו"ה שבשם הוי' -
ז"א ומלכות - נקראים בן ובת . . . וכאשר ישנם "אב
ואם" ו"בן ובת" - אזי ישנו שם הוי' בשלמותו . . .

ומזה מובן גם הדגשת חשיבות ענין המשפחה בתור
מציאות חדשה - כמו שם הוי', כביכול, שאינו ד'
אותיות בפני עצמן שנקתבות ביחד, אלא שנגעשית
מציאות חדשה של שם העצם, שם המפרש.

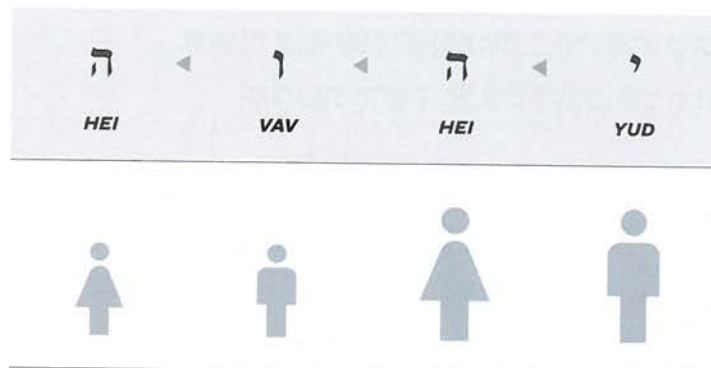
The Torah's mystical teachings strongly emphasize the importance of the family unit. The minimum requirement to fulfill the mitzvah to "be fruitful and multiply" is to give birth to a son and a daughter. Kabbalah and *Chasidut* explain that this is hinted at in the name of G-d, spelled with the letters *yud* and *hei*, followed by *vav* and *hei*. The *yud* corresponds to the father, the first *hei* to the mother. . . . The *vav* alludes to the male child, and the final *hei* to the daughter. . . . A family with all four elements—father, mother, daughter, and son—is a complete representation of the Divine Name. . . .

It follows, then, that just as the four letters of the Divine Name, when inscribed together as a word, become a unique entity—G-d's Personal Name—so the individuals of a family are fundamentally transformed into a new existence when they become a family unit.



FIGURE 2.1

The Divine Name and the Family Unit





TEXT 5

The Ultimate Sacred Temple

The Rebbe, *ibid.*, pp. 157-158

"וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם" (שְׁמוֹת כה, ח),
וְדַרְשׁוּ חֲכָמֵינוּ ז"ל: "בְּתוֹכּוֹ לֹא נֶאֱמַר אֶלָּא
בְּתוֹכְכֶם, בְּתוֹךְ כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל".

וְלִכְאוּרָה: עֵינֵינוּ הַשְׂרָאָת הַשְׂכִּינָה בְּמִשְׁכָּנוֹ וּמִקְדָּשׁ - הִיא
צָרִיף לַהֲיוֹת נִכְתָּב בְּפָרוּשׁ וּבִגְלוּי, וּבְרָמָז - הַשְׂרָאָת
הַשְׂכִּינָה בְּתוֹךְ כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל; וּבִפְעֵל - הָרִי
זֶה לְהַפֵּךְ: בִּגְלוּי נֶאֱמַר בְּפָסוּק: "וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם"
(בְּתוֹךְ כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד), אֶלָּא שֶׁהַעֲצָה בְּשִׁבִּיל לַפְעֵל
הָעֵנִינִי ד' "וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם" הִיא - "וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ",
שֶׁעַל יְדֵי זֶה יִהְיֶה הָעֵנִינִי ד' "וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם".

הִיכָן הוּא הָעֵנִינִי ד' "וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם"? ... אֶצֶל הָאֵב
וְהָאֵם הַבָּנִים וְהַבָּנוֹת, כְּאֶמֹר לְעִיל שְׁהֵם מִצִּיּוֹנוֹת
אַחַת שֶׁל מִשְׁפָּחָה.

In communicating His directive to build a Holy Temple, G-d stated, "Build for Me a Temple and I will dwell within them" (EXODUS 25:8). Our sages note the anomaly that the verse says "within *them*," the Jewish people, instead of "within *it*," the Temple. This informs us that G-d wishes to dwell not only in His Temple but also within each of us.

In truth, G-d's dwelling within us is not a secondary objective but the primary objective of this directive.



How to Bring Traditional
Beauty into a Modern
Family: a lecture by
Rabbi Manis Friedman:
myjli.com/Rebbe

For if G-d's primary home were the Temple, the Torah should have stated clearly that G-d would reside "within *it*," while at the same time finding a way to hint at the concept that G-d *also* dwells within us. Instead, the reverse is the case: The Torah states openly, "I will dwell in *them*," indicating that *this* is the primary objective. The opening of the verse—"Build for Me a Temple"—is simply the method by which the primary goal of dwelling within the Jewish people can be achieved.

Where is the physical location of G-d's dwelling among us? . . . In a home where father, mother, sister, and brother form a cohesive family unit.

**TEXT 6**

The Overriding Consideration

The Rebbe, English correspondence, 5730 [1969–1970]

I trust it is unnecessary to emphasize to you at length that the Jewish way of life, together with its customs, etc., is not only very significant in general, but also in every detail and in the very order of things. In light of this, it becomes obvious how important are peace and harmony between a husband and wife, since the mitzvah of making peace between a husband and wife is counted among the mitzvot whose fruits a Jew

enjoys in this world, while the “capital” remains for the World-to-Come. These are mentioned right at the beginning of the Siddur—together with the morning blessings, which are said even before starting the actual morning prayers.

With this approach in mind, it will prove somewhat easier to understand that even if one party were to be completely in the right (or almost completely in the right), while the other party was completely in the wrong (or almost completely in the wrong), it would still be incumbent upon both parties to do everything in their power to restore peace and harmony. . . .

As to the situation itself, namely, who is right and who is wrong, I cannot, of course, go into this, nor is it necessary in light of what has been said above. For the important thing, as already stated, is to strengthen the family ties, this being the overriding consideration.

However, it would be well if you could find a mutual friend before whom both of you could unburden yourselves in a frank exchange of grievance. It is possible that an outsider, who at the same time is a friend, might see more objectively, and find the best way to straighten things out, and in the soonest possible time, so that once again peace and harmony may reign in the home.



Rabbi YY Jacobson
explores the vital role of
disagreement in nurturing
relationships:
myjli.com/Rebbe



TEXT 7

Every Effort Is Worthwhile

The Rebbe, English correspondence, 18 Iyar, 5736 [May 18, 1976]

Our Torah teaches us that “As water reflects a face, so does one heart respond to another” (PROVERBS 27:19). I see from your letter that you are willing to do everything that depends on you that there should be Sholom Bayis—peace and harmony in your home. And as a practical businessman, you are surely implementing this in actual practice. I am, therefore, confident that the above quotation from the Torah will be fulfilled also in the present case.

I want to take advantage of this opportunity since you have written to me—to emphasize again the enormous importance of Sholom Bayis, so much so that our Torah, called Toras Emes because it presents the truth, declares (TALMUD, SOTAH 17A) that when a husband and wife are worthy, the Shechinah (Divine Presence) abides among them. Obviously, every effort is worthwhile to ensure G-d’s Presence in the home, with all that it means in terms of His blessings, materially and spiritually.

Hence, even when one thinks that one is 100% right it pays to conciliate for the sake of peace and especially for the sake of the abiding Shechinah, as above.

There is also the assurance of our Sages in such matters: “Try hard and you will succeed” (TALMUD, MEGILAH 6B).



TEXT 8

A Concrete Proposal

The Rebbe, *Torat Menachem* 5734:2, pp. 155-156

ואַחַד הָעֲצוֹת בְּזֶה - שְׁגֵם בְּלֹאוֹ הָכִי הָרִי זֶה דָּבָר גָּדוֹל ...

יֵשׁ לְהַשְׁתַּדֵּל שֶׁהַחֵל מֵעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת לַפְּנוֹת עָרֵב, וְעַל אַחַת
כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה בְּלִיל שַׁבָּת, שָׂאז עוֹרְכִים סְעוּדָה הָרְאוּיָה
לְשִׁמָּה, סְעוּדַת שַׁבָּת - יִתְאַסְּפוּ בִּיחַד כָּלֶם, הָאֵב וְהָאֵם
עִם הַבָּנִים וְהַבָּנוֹת, בְּאוֹתוֹ חֶדֶר וְעַל אוֹתוֹ שְׁלֶחָן, וְיִשְׁתַּדְּלוּ
שֶׁהַדְּבוּר בִּינִיָּהֶם יִהְיֶה בְּאֶפֶן הַמִּתְאִים וְשִׁינָּה לְעֵנִין הַשַּׁבָּת.

וְכַאֲשֶׁר יִתְנַהֲגוּ כִּף בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת, שָׂאז אֵין עֲנִינִים מִפְּרִידִים
שֶׁל "עוֹבְדֵין דָּחַל", כִּף שֶׁנִּקְל יוֹתֵר שִׁיְהִיָּה צְרוּפָה וְחִבּוּר
וְדִבְקוּת כָּל בְּנֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה בִּיחַד בְּתוֹר מְצִיאוֹת אַחַת - אֲזִי
תִּהְיֶה "מִשְׁפָּחָה בְּרִיָּאָה" בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת, וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה תִּהְיֶה
"מִשְׁפָּחָה בְּרִיָּאָה" גַּם בְּמִשְׁחָה כָּל יְמֵי הַשָּׁבוּעַ שְׁלֹאֲחֵרֵי זֶה,
כִּי הָעֲנִינִים הַמְּצָרִפִּים וְהַמְּחַבְּרִים כָּלֶם יַחַד (בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת,
וּבְפֶרֶט בְּסְעוּדַת שַׁבָּת), יִכְרִיעוּ וְיִתְגַּבְּרוּ עַל הַחֲלוּקִים
שִׁישְׁנָם בֵּין הָאֵב לְבֵן וְהָאֵם לַבַּת ("כְּאִמָּה כְּבִתָּה"), בְּנוֹגֵעַ
לְהַתְּעַסְקוּתָם הַפְּרָטִית, וְעַד שְׁגֵם הַפְּרָטִים עֲצָמָם יִצְטָרְפוּ
כָּלֶם יַחַד בְּאֶפֶן שֶׁכָּל פֶּרֶט מְשָׁלִים וּמוֹסִיף אֶת הַפְּרָט הַשָּׂנִי.

וְכִיּוֹן שֶׁאֵין עֲנִין שֶׁנִּשְׁעָשָׂה מֵעֲצָמוֹ, וְעַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה כְּשִׁישְׁנֵנו
הַרְגֵּל שֶׁל כַּמָּה שָׁנִים לְהַתְּנַהֵג בְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁל הָעֶדֶר שִׁימַת לֵב לְגִמְרֵי
לְעֵנִין הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה - הִנֵּה עַל כָּל פָּנִים מִכָּאן וּלְהַבָּא צְרִיף לְדַעַת
שֶׁזֶהוּ עֲנִין הַדּוֹרֵשׁ שִׁימַת לֵב, יִגִּיעָה וְהַשְׁתַּדְּלוּת פַּעַם אַחֵר פַּעַם.

וְאֲזִי יִשְׁנָה הַבְּטָחָה שֶׁכַּאֲשֶׁר "יִגְעֶתָ" אֲזִי
בְּנֻדָּאִי "וּמְצָאָתָ" (מְגִלָּה ו, ב).

One solution for this challenge is to emphasize something that is already important for other reasons. . . .

Efforts should be made to ensure that all family members come together, beginning with Friday evening and especially on Friday night when the Shabbat meal is served. Parents and children should gather in the same room, around the same table, engaging in conversations fitting for Shabbat.

On Shabbat, it's easier for the family to unite because family members aren't engaged in their weekday endeavors. When the family nurtures this unity on Shabbat, it will experience unity throughout the week. The factor that unites them, cultivated during the Shabbat meal, will prevail over their differing focus areas so that their differences only complement each other.

Achieving such unity within the family is not likely to occur spontaneously because the importance of the family unit has been overlooked for several years. We must acknowledge that this area demands dedicated attention and effort.

Fortunately, the Talmud (MEGILAH 6B) assures us that diligent work will yield positive results.

III. THE DIVINE: A FAMILY'S NEED

The Rebbe repeatedly underscored the indispensable role of Torah and *mitzvot* as fundamental cornerstones of familial existence. To this end, he initiated an array of family-oriented mitzvah campaigns, empowering every Jewish household to establish their domestic realm upon the bedrock of at least one sacred commandment.



TEXT 9

A Solid Foundation

The Rebbe, English correspondence, 28 Av, 5711 [August 30, 1951]

I have learned with pleasure of your forthcoming marriage. I send you and your bride my blessings of Mazal tov, mazal tov.

It is superfluous to underscore that from the moment of marriage a new era begins in the life of the two persons who have united into one to build together an eternal home among our people Israel into posterity.

As in the case of building a physical home, the important thing—even to those who otherwise attach much value to external appearances and superficialities—is the solid foundation upon which the entire edifice is to rest.

So and more so, in the case of the spiritual home, the important and vital conditions are not to be found in

Wedding ceremony,
1951, the Rebbe
(L.) officiating.
(Photo: Jewish
Educational Media)



superfluous aspects, but in the reliability and character for the material to withstand all sorts of tests and all kinds of weather.

What I mean by the solid foundations of the Jewish home needs no elaboration to you. Throughout the ages, the Torah and mitzvos have been the solid foundations of our people and have given us courage and strength to endure the most terrible inhuman persecutions and tests to the limit of self-sacrifice and martyrdom. This power of self-sacrifice for Torah and mitzvos has made us indestructible.

It is my heartfelt wish to you and I am confident of it, that you and your chosen one will together build your home, from the start, upon the solid foundations of Torah and mitzvos, with an unshakable determination to make your home Jewish in every way, in thought and in deed, thus assuring yourselves real happiness, Jewish happiness.










Mrs. Rivkah Slonim
discusses navigating
family tension on the
path to deeper Jewish
observance:
myjli.com/Rebbe



FIGURE 2.2

Home-Based Mitzvah Campaigns

CAMPAIGN	DETAILS
 TZEDAKAH	<p>Every home should have a <i>tzedakah</i> box. It will remind the household to give <i>tzedakah</i> daily (except on Shabbat and the festivals, when we refrain from handling money). It should be attached to the kitchen wall, to ensure it is noticed.</p>
 A HOME FILLED WITH HOLY BOOKS	<p>A Jewish home needs Jewish sacred texts. For starters, a <i>siddur</i> (prayer book) and a <i>Tehilim</i> (Psalms)—books of both prayer and study. This nucleus should be expanded to embrace additional sacred volumes.</p>
 MEZUZAH	<p>A Jewish home needs kosher <i>mezuzot</i> on all its doorposts. The <i>mezuzot</i> should be checked periodically to ensure that they remain kosher.</p>
 TORAH STUDY	<p>Each Jew should engage in Torah study at home. Couples are encouraged to study Torah together, and fathers and mothers should study with their children.</p>
 SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY CANDLES	<p>Jewish women and girls should light Shabbat candles each Friday afternoon before sunset and on the evenings of Jewish festivals. Married women should light (at least) two candles.</p>
 KOSHER	<p>Jews need to eat kosher food and maintain a kosher home.</p>
 FAMILY PURITY	<p>Jewish married couples should observe Jewish marital laws.</p>

IV. PRESERVING INDIVIDUALITY

Familial cohesion must not come at the cost of individuality. Care must be taken to avoid family members feeling neglected or underappreciated as individuals.

In a letter penned to an Israeli government official, the Rebbe addressed this topic in the context of the Israeli kibbutz. He espoused the principle that groups must function as a platform for individual development.

Accordingly, each child within the familial framework should have a distinctive stake in a home-based mitzvah.



TEXT 10A

Two Human Needs

The Rebbe, *Igrot Kodesh* 23, pp. 264–266

"כַּשֵּׁם שֶׁאֵין פְּרָצוּפֵיהֶם דּוּמִים, כֵּן אֵין דְּעוּתֵיהֶם דּוּמוֹת זֶה לָזֶה" (סְנֵהֲדְרִין לח, א). וְלָכֵן הִיָּחִיד מוֹצֵא סְפּוּק וּשְׁלֵמוֹת כְּשֶׁאֶפְשָׁר לוֹ לְהוֹצִיא לְפַעַל כָּל מֶה שֵׁיִשׁ לוֹ בְּכֵחַ, וּבְמִדָּה הַכִּי מְלֵאָה, לֹא כָּל כֵּן בְּעֵנִינִים הַמְשַׁתְּפִים שֵׁיִשׁ לוֹ עִם בְּנֵי חֲבֵרְתּוֹ, אֲלֵא דּוֹקָא בְּשִׁטַּח הָאִנְדִּיבִידוּאֲלִי שְׁלוֹ שְׁבוּ מִצָּטִין הוּא מַחְבְּרִיו וּסְבִיבָתּוֹ, כִּי הֲלֹא זֹהִי הָעֲצָמִיוֹת שְׁלוֹ.

לְאִידָהּ, אֵין הָאָדָם בְּטִבְעוֹ מְתַבּוּדָּד וְ"לֹא טוֹב הָיִית הָאָדָם לְבִדּוֹ" (בְּרֵאשִׁית ב, יח), וְהוּא מַחֲפֵשׁ חַיֵּי חֲבֵרָה, אֲשֶׁר בָּהּ וְעַל יָדָהּ וּבְעֶזְרָתָהּ יוֹכֵל לְהִגִּיעַ לְשְׁלֵמוֹתָהּ הוּא.

The Talmud (SANHEDRIN 38A) notes that "just as people's faces differ one from another, so do their

IGROT KODESH

A selection of Hebrew and Yiddish letters penned by the Rebbe. As of 2023, 35 volumes have been published in this series. The letters are published in chronological order, starting from 1925 and extending thus far to 1983. Only those letters that are of relevance to the public are published, and personal information is excised. The letters cover a wide range of issues: communal activism, Chabad philosophy, Talmud, Jewish law, kabbalah, practical advice, and much more.

minds.” Therefore, individuals attain contentment and wholeness when they actualize their personal and unique potential in its fullest measure. This level of satisfaction is not found to the same extent when they engage in matters that they share in common with others. Instead, it is achieved through engaging in things they excel at and that set them apart from their companions and surroundings. This achievement allows them to express their essence.

On the other hand, human nature is not to live in solitude—“It is not good for the human to be alone” (GENESIS 2:18)—and it is our nature to seek social interactions that allow us to reach our completeness.



TEXT 10B

The Proper Balance

The Rebbe, *ibid.*

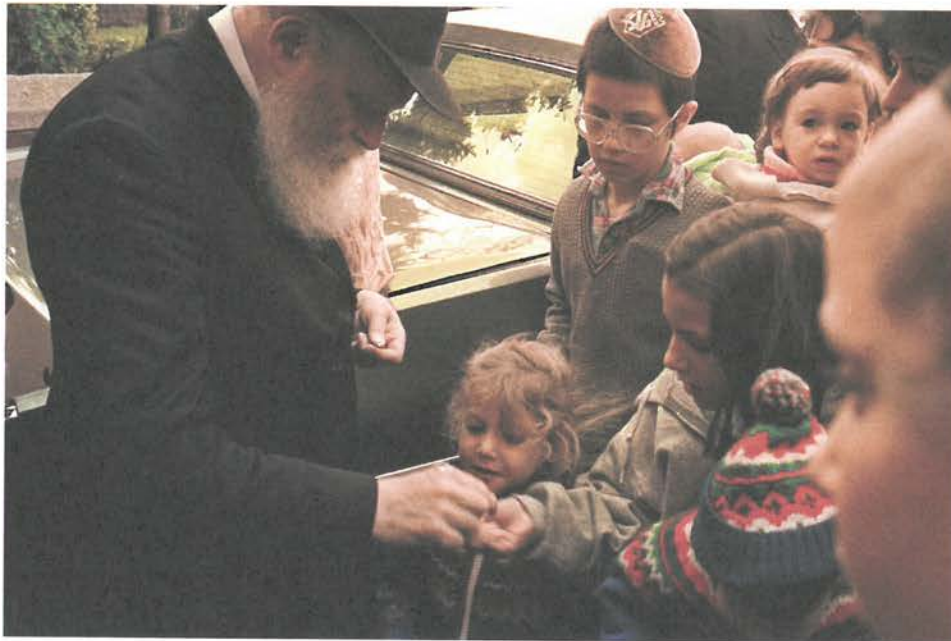
מתוך הנחה האמונה, הנה מחד גיסא יש לחיי הקבוצה חשיבות גדולה בזה שמהווים רקע לשתוף כוחות של כמה וכמה אנשים, ועל ידי כך להשיג גדולים יותר... לאידך גיסא... הקבוצה וחיי הקבוצה אינו מטרה והשיג בפני עצמו, אלא שלב והכנה ודרך לפתיח האינדיבידואליות והיחידות שבכל אחד ואחד, והתגשמותם באפן הכי טוב ובמדה הכי מלאה...

שְׁלֵעֲתִים תְּכֹפּוֹת וְאוֹלֵי גַם בְּרֵב הַפְּעָמִים, עֵצָם סֵדֶר
 חַיִּי הַקְּבוּצָה מְכַרְח, כְּאֶמּוֹר, לְעוֹרֵר הַתְּנַגְדוֹת פְּנִימִית
 נֶגֶד הַסֵּדֶר וְהַמְשָׁטֶר הַמְתַּאֲמֵץ לְהַכְנִיעַ אֶת הַיְּחִיד בְּתוֹר
 יְחִיד וּלְהַפְּכוֹ לְחֶלֶק שֶׁל הַגּוֹשׁ, הֵינּוּ הַקְּבוּצָה. לְעִמָּת
 זֹאת, אִם הַיְּחִיד יוֹדֵעַ שְׂאִין זֶה אֶלָּא שֶׁלֵּב בְּהַתְּפַתְחוּתוֹ,
 וְהַדָּרוֹ הַמְּגִדִּילָה אֶת אֶפְשָׁרִיוּתוֹ לְהַגִּיעַ לְהַשְׂגִּים
 אֵינְדִּיבִידוּאֲלִיִּים גְּדוֹלִים יוֹתֵר, עַל יְדֵי כֹּף שֶׁמְשַׁחֲרָרִים
 אוֹתוֹ מִדְּאָגוֹת בְּשֶׁלֵּב נִמּוֹךְ מְזֶה (בְּהַנּוֹגֵעַ לְצִרְכּוֹ הַהֶכְרָחִיִּים
 הַמְשָׂגִים בְּקֹל יוֹתֵר וּבְלִי בְּזָבוֹז כּוֹחוֹת וְזִמְן, הוֹדוֹת
 לַפְּעֻלָּה הַמְשַׁתְּפֶת הַקְּבוּצִית), הֵרִי הַפָּרָה זֹו, לֹא זֹו בְּלִבָּד
 שֶׁתְּבַטֵּל הַתְּנַגְדוּתוֹ הַטְּבָעִית אֶלָּא עוֹד זֹאת שֶׁתּוֹסִיף
 בּוֹ הַתְּלַהֲבוּת וְהַתְּמַסְרוּת בְּמִלּוֹי תְּפִקִּידּוֹ בְּקְבוּצָה.

On the one hand, collective living is essential because it provides a structure for people to share resources—through which great things can be attained, greater even than the sum of the individual strengths. . . . On the other hand, . . . collective living is not an end in itself. It is a preparatory stage to the development of each person's individuality and uniqueness, allowing it to be realized in the best and to the fullest measure. . . .

Often, the idea of collective living arouses in members an inner resistance against the order that seeks to subdue the individual's uniqueness and endeavors to transform the individual into a member of the larger bloc. If, however,

people are informed that their collective living leads to personal development and maximizes their ability to reach even greater personal goals—by freeing them from the worries of less important goals (because the group utilizes its increased capacity to provide for everyone's basic needs without wasting critical time and resources)—it would not only neutralize their natural resistance but increase their passion and commitment to their roles within the group.



The Rebbe distributes coins for children to use for the mitzvah of giving *tzedakah*, 4 Tishrei, 5747 (October 7, 1986), outside Chabad's headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York. (Photo: Jewish Educational Media)



TEXT 11

An Urgent Request

The Rebbe, public letter, 10-15 Shevat, 5747 [February 9-13, 1987],
Likutei Sichot 26, p. 420

צו אלע אידישע קינדער בכל מקום שהם, ה' עליהם יחיו
 שלום וברכה! ...

קומט דא מער בפרטיות דער פארשלאג און בקשה כפולה
 צו יעדערן פון אייר, אן אינגעלע אדער א מיידעלע, צו
 מאכן פון זיין חדר, זיין בעטל, זיין טישל און אזוי ווייטער -
 א בית תורה, תפלה, און גמילות חסדים: יעדן טאג לערנען
 דארט תורה, זאגן א תפלה לה', געבן צדקה אין א צדקה
 פושקע (א חוץ פון שבת און יום טוב), און אזוי ווייטער.

און יעדער פון אייר זאל האבן זיין אייגענעם סדור
 (תפלה), אייגענעם חמש (אדער א אנדער ספר של
 תורה), און, להבדיל, אן אייגענע צדקה פושקע,

[און אנשרייבען דארט (אויף דעם בלאט וואס
 קומט איידער עס הויפט זיך אן דער סדור, אדער
 ספר) "לה' הארץ ומלואה" (אדער אין א ראשי
 תבות - "לה"ו) און זיין נאמען, כמנהג ישראל. אויב
 מעגליך - אזוי אויך אויף דער צדקה פושקע.]

LIKUTEI SICHOT

Widely considered the Rebbe's magnum opus, the 39 volumes of *Likutei Sichot* feature scholarly essays relating to themes in the weekly Torah portions and the Jewish holidays. The Rebbe initially conveyed these concepts in his public talks and subsequently reworked them for publication. In some volumes, the essays appear in Yiddish, while in others they are in Hebrew. The appendixes to these volumes include letters written by the Rebbe.

To all Jewish children everywhere, G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing! . . .

I am now presenting in greater detail my suggestion and urgent request to each of you, boy and girl, to turn your bedroom—your bed, your table, and so on—into a miniature home of Torah, prayer, and good deeds.

You can do this by using your personal space and furniture to study some Torah, recite a prayer, put money into a *tzedakah* box (excluding Shabbat and festivals), and the like—daily.

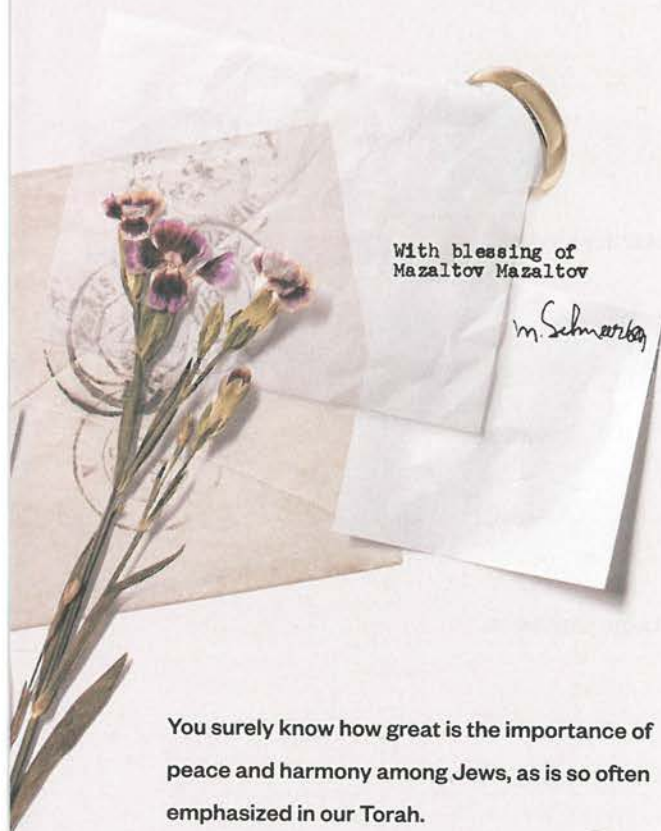
You should own your own siddur (prayer book) and pray from it there, your own Chumash or other Torah book and study it there, and keep your own *tzedakah* box there.

(You should follow the Jewish custom of inscribing on the inside cover of your siddur and sacred books the Hebrew words **להשם הארץ** [or its abbreviation: **לה"ו**], meaning, “The earth and all its contents belong to G-d,” with your name below it. If possible, write your name on your *tzedakah* box as well.)



The Rebbe Writes

Selections from the Rebbe's letters providing advice to couples experiencing relationship difficulties.



You surely know how great is the importance of peace and harmony among Jews, as is so often emphasized in our Torah.

The Torah is even more emphatic about Shalom Bayis [marital harmony], peace and harmony in the relationship between husband and wife. So much so that, despite the sanctity of every word in the Torah, especially the sanctity of G-d's name inscribed in the Torah, there is one occasion when G-d Himself orders His written name to be effaced by water, and that is... in order to preserve the peaceful relationship between husband and wife.

מנהל מכתביו
ליוכאווטש
RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213
493-9250
770 איסטון פארקווי
ברוקלין, נ.י.

Greeting and Blessing:

In light of the above you will find my answer to your question, which is that you ought to try your utmost not only to preserve a peaceful and harmonious relationship with your husband, but even to strengthen it and, as in every area of the desirable and good, to the point where it will serve as an inspiring example to all those around you.

Needless to say, I am not attempting to make a judgment as to who is right and who is wrong, who is at fault, and to what extent, etc., etc. But even assuming, for the sake of argument, that one of you is entirely in the right, it is still very worthwhile to do everything possible, for the sake of preserving Shalom Bayis.

Moreover, as the wisest of all men said, "As water reflects the face, so does one heart reflect another." It is certain that a consistently friendly and conciliatory attitude on your part is bound to evoke reciprocal feelings on the part of your husband.

As requested, I will remember you and the others mentioned in your letter in prayer, and may G-d grant that you will have good news to report.

P.S. In accordance with your request, this letter is sent to you on a priority basis, Special Delivery.

English correspondence,
dated 5734 [1973-1974]

I received your letter with considerable delay.

I trust it is unnecessary to emphasize to you at length that the Jewish way of life, together with its customs, etc., is not only very significant in general, but also in every detail and in the very order of things. In light of this, it becomes obvious how important are peace and harmony between a husband and wife, since the mitzvah of making peace between a husband and wife is counted among the mitzvot whose fruits a Jew enjoys in this world, while the "capital" remains for the World-to-Come. These are mentioned right at the beginning of the Siddur—together with the morning blessings, which are said even before starting the actual morning prayers.

With this approach in mind, it will prove somewhat easier to understand that even if one party were to be completely in the right (or almost completely in the right), while the other party was completely in the wrong (or almost completely in the wrong), it would still be incumbent upon both parties to do everything in their power to restore peace and harmony. Certainly this duty becomes paramount in the case of a husband and wife who hold prominent positions in the community, as a result of which other Jews look up to them for example and guidance. . . .

Moreover, and of course this is also most essential, since G-d has blessed you with children, good children, who require the attention, love and upbringing of both parents, and these children are surely entitled to receive what is due to them from their parents, there can be no shadow of a doubt that each of you should do everything possible not to strain the relationship further, but on the contrary, both of you must try to strengthen it and restore it to full harmony.

As to the situation itself, namely, who is right and who is wrong, I cannot, of course, go into this, nor is it necessary in light of what has been said above. For the important thing, as already stated, is to strengthen the family ties, this being the overriding consideration. However, it would be well if you could find a mutual friend before whom both of you could unburden yourselves in a frank exchange of grievance. It is possible that an outsider, who at the same time is a friend, might see more objectively, and find the best way to straighten things out, and in the soonest possible time, so that once again peace and harmony may reign in the home.

Hoping to hear good news from you.

English correspondence,
dated 5730 [1969-1970]

I received some information about the relationship at home, but I do not know to what extent it reflects the actual situation. Hence, I want to convey to you some thoughts in the light of what the relationship should be according to the Shulchan Aruch (the Code of Jewish Law)—the Jew's practical guide in life. If the relationship is, indeed, in keeping with it, the purpose of this letter will be to strengthen and deepen it, as there is always room for improvement in all matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and Mitzvos. On the other hand, if it is not quite what it should be, I trust that, since the Torah is surely "a lamp unto your feet," you will bring it up to the desired level and you will do it with joy and gladness of heart.

The central point in the way of conducting a Jewish home and family life is that it has to be based on the way of the Torah, "whose ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace." If this rule applies to all activities of a Jew, even outside the home, how much more so within the home itself!

Of course, since G-d has created human beings with minds and feelings of their own and these are not uniform in all, peace and harmony can be achieved only on the basis of "give and take," that is, meeting each other halfway. For a husband and wife to make concessions to each other is not, and should not be considered, a sacrifice, G-d forbid. On the contrary, this is what the Torah teaches and expects, for we are talking about concessions that do not involve compromise in regard to the fulfillment of Mitzvos, and both of you are of the same mind that the laws of the Shulchan Aruch must not be compromised.

Furthermore, to achieve true peace and harmony calls for making such concessions willingly and graciously—not grudgingly, as if it were a sacrifice, as mentioned above, but in the realization that it is for the benefit of one's self and one's partner in life, and for one's self perhaps even more, since it is made in fulfillment of G-d's Will. And if our Sages exhort every Jew "to receive every person with a friendly face," certainly one's wife or husband.

Many are the sayings of our Sages, including also our Rebbes of saintly memory, which urge husband and wife always to discuss matters of mutual concern, and to give patient attention to the opinion of the other and then act in mutual agreement. It is also very desirable that they should have at least one regular shiur (study period) in a section of Torah which is of interest to both, such as on the weekly Sedra [Torah portion], or on a timely subject connected with a particular season or festival, as for example now that we are approaching the month of Elul—on prayer and Teshuvah [repentance], and similarly on the festivals of Tishrei, and so forth. . . .

I hope and pray that each and both of you will make every effort in the direction outlined above and will do so with real joy and gladness of heart, and may G-d grant that you should have true Nachas, which is Torah Nachas, from each other and jointly from your offspring, in happy circumstances materially and spiritually.

Letters from the Rebbe,
vol. 5, p. 191

I am responding to your letter regarding the state of marital harmony in your home.

In such cases, it is recommended to involve genuine friends in order to mediate and restore harmony in the home.

It is clear that from your end, you must be committed to acquiescing to all of her valid demands. It is not enough that you promise to do so; it must be expressed in actual practice. Regarding the issues that are not clear-cut, you should both rely on the judgment of neutral parties. When a wife sees that her husband is sincere and serious in his desire for harmony—and is willing to make concessions for it—this itself usually generates affection. Our sages repeatedly emphasized the value of making concessions, even when one is in the right. May G-d help you, so that you will have good news to report in this matter.

In order to facilitate the necessary Divine assistance for swift success in this effort, I recommend that you recite the daily portion of Psalms each morning after the prayers, and that you give some coins to charity each weekday before the prayers. You should commit to maintain these practices until next Rosh Hashanah.

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build an everlasting Jewish home
based on the foundations of the
Torah and Mitzvoth

KEY POINTS

- 1 There is always room for improvement in all matters of goodness and holiness. Accordingly, we can all continually enhance our family relationships.
- 2 The Torah places great importance on family life and praises its virtues. By allowing G-d's presence into our families, we ultimately repair the entire world.
- 3 If we approach the family with a needs-based mindset, we might find justification to invest less into it, leading to weaker family bonds. By contrast, when we appreciate the Torah's view of the family, we are motivated to invest more and strengthen it.
- 4 To foster greater family cohesion, the Rebbe recommended that all Jewish families reembrace the Torah tradition of celebrating the Shabbat meal together on Friday nights.
- 5 The Rebbe taught that Judaism provides the best foundation for a stable Jewish home. He therefore initiated various home-based mitzvah campaigns, encouraging Jewish families to embrace at least one mitzvah, making it a cornerstone of their family life.
- 6 Living together in a collective setting must aid each person in developing their individuality and uniqueness. Therefore, even as we aim for family cohesiveness, we must aspire simultaneously to honor each person's distinctiveness.