



RABBI AARON Editor, Torah Tidbits

GOLDSCHIEDER

Rav Kook's Meeting With the Lubavitcher Rebbe

In the summer 1929 the Rebbe of Lubavitch, Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, known affectionately in Chabad circles as the *Frieddiker Rebbe*, visited the Land of Israel. He stayed for a period of time in the Old City of Jerusalem. Rav Kook requested to meet with the revered Rebbe.

Rav Kook asked his close colleague, Rabbi Aryeh Levin to escort him on the visit. When they arrived at the Rebbe's door, they were welcomed and Rav Aryeh Levin was privy to hear the conversation between these two towering figures. They addressed the most pressing issues of the day and also conversed in the depth of Torah and the spheres of Kabbalah.

Rav Aryeh Levin reported that at one point Rav Kook turned to the Rebbe and proceeded to share his singular perspective regarding loving the nation of Israel as a whole and the notion of rebuilding the nation on the holy soil of Eretz Yisrael.

"Being present at that meeting I learned something fundamental about Rav Kook's approach that I never fully grasped until that moment," said Rav Aryeh Levin.

"When it comes to caring for another Jew one should not limit the notion of *mesiras nefesh*, (giving one's soul) to merely offering financial resources or giving of one's time to help another Jew. One must understand the implications of the obligation 'to sacrifice for another Jew' in the most literal sense: One must *give* one's *soul* for the sake of others. In other words, even if it means paying the price of your own spiritual perfection, relinquishing one's own *olam habah*, it is well worth it, when engaging in saving another Jew." (*Heichal HaAhava*, p.175)

In the same vein, Rav Kook was known to have virtually carried all of the nation of Israel on his shoulders and in his heart. He felt their joys and pains as if they were his own. On one particular occasion Rav Aryeh Levin took note of the endless concern and empathy Rav Kook extended toward his beloved people. He asked his mentor, "How



does one merit to feel an inseparable bond with their fellow Jew?” Rav Kook answered him: “Is this not the way of the Almighty? The verse states: ‘You are the children of the Lord.’ The Almighty cherishes every Jew in the same way a mother or father adores their own child. We as Jews are instructed by the Torah to follow in Hashem’s ways, *ve’halachta be’drachav.*” For me, there is no other way than accepting my role as a father who instinctively exhibits endless love for his beloved children.” (*Heichal HaAhava*, p.399) ■

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