

## The Four Part Song:

There is one who sings the song of his own life, and in himself he finds everything, his full spiritual satisfaction.

There is another who sings the song of his people. He leaves the circle of his own individual self, because he finds it without sufficient breadth, without an idealistic basis. He aspires toward the heights, and he attaches himself with a gentle love to the whole community of Israel. Together with her he sings her songs. He feels grieved in her afflictions and delights in her hopes. He contemplates noble and pure thoughts about her past and her future, and probes with love and wisdom her inner spiritual essence.

There is another who reaches toward more distant realms, and he goes beyond the boundary of Israel to sing the song of man. His spirit extends to the wider vistas of the majesty of man generally, and his noble essence. He aspires toward man's general goal and looks forward toward his higher perfection. From this source of life he draws the subjects of his meditation and study, his aspirations and his visions.

Then there is one who rises toward wider horizons, until he links himself with all existence, with all God's creatures, with all worlds, and he sings his song with all of them. It is of one such as this that tradition has said that whoever sings a portion of song each day is assured of having a share in the world to come.

And then there is one who rises with all these songs in one ensemble, and they all join their voices. Together they sing their songs with beauty, each one lends vitality and life to the other. They are sounds of joy and gladness, sounds of jubilation and celebration, sounds of ecstasy and holiness.

The song of the self, the song of the people, the song of man, the song of the world all merge in him at all times, in every hour.

And this full comprehensiveness rises to become the song of holiness, the song of God, the song of Israel, in its full strength and beauty, in its full authenticity and greatness. The name "Israel" stands for shir el, the song of God. It is a simple song, a twofold song, a threefold song and a fourfold song. It is the Song of Songs of Solomon, Shlomo, which means peace or wholeness. It is the song of the King in whom is wholeness.

# A discussion on The Ultimate Jew based on Rav Kook

## Other sources and quotes to bring into discussion:

### Tehillim 15:

A psalm of David. LORD, who may sojourn in Your tent, who may dwell on Your holy mountain? He who lives without blame, who does what is right, and in his heart acknowledges the truth; whose tongue is not given to evil; who has never done harm to his fellow, or borne reproach for [his acts toward] his neighbor; for whom a contemptible man is abhorrent, but who honors those who fear the LORD; who stands by his oath even to his hurt; who has never lent money at interest, or accepted a bribe against the innocent. The man who acts thus shall never be shaken.

### Makkot 24a on Tehillim 15:

The Gemara relates: When Rabban Gamliel would reach this verse he would cry, and he said: It is one who performed all these actions who shall never be moved; but if he performed only one of them, he shall be moved. The Sages said to him: Is it written: He who performs all these? Rather, the phrase "he who performs these" is written, indicating that one is blessed even in a case where he performed one of them.

### Baraita in Torat Kohanim (Chapter 4, Midrash 12)

"Love your fellow man as yourself" (Vayikra 19;18). Rabbi Akiva said this is a great principle of the Torah.

Ben Azai said, "This is the book of the generations of Adam – on the day that G-d created man, He made him in His Image" (Bereishit 5;1) is a greater principle than that.

### Addition to the Baraita brought my the Maharal:

Ben Zoma says: We have found a more inclusive verse and it is "Shema Yisrael" (Devarim 6;4).

Ben Nanas says we have found a more inclusive verse than that and it is "Love your fellow man as yourself" (Vayikra 19;18).

Shimon Ben Pazi says we have found a more inclusive verse than that and it is "The first lamb you shall sacrifice in the morning and the second lamb you shall sacrifice in the evening." (Shemot 29;39 and Bamidbar 28;4) [referring to the daily Tamid (perpetual) offering brought every morning and evening].

Rabbi Ploni stood up and said that the halacha is in accordance with Ben Pazi as it is written, "As all that I show you, the structure of the Mishkan and all its vessels: so shall you do." (Shemot 25;9)

### Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk:

"If I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you. But if I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you."

## Some Interactive Resources:

**Activity** – Get Chanichim to draw a circle and put talents/characteristics they think they possess inside the circle, and those they don't outside the circle. What faculties has Hashem given you to fulfil what you need to do in life? Does your personality/purpose equate with any of the things Rav Kook describes in this piece?

**Pictures** – Show Chanichim pictures of famous people – e.g Newton, Rav Soloveitchik, Baal Shem Tov, Ben Gurion, Gandhi..etc and ask them where they think they would place them in Rav Kook's four part song.

**Activity** – Draw a big gingerbread man in the centre of the circle and ask Chanichim to put inside it characteristic they would associate with "the Ultimate Jew."

**Article** – Chabad "the Ultimate Yom Kippur Jew"

## Some Textual Questions to ask Chanichim:

- What type of person is being depicted in each part of this "song"?
- Why does Rav Kook call this a song? What musical metaphors does he use throughout?
- Is Rav Kook saying here there is one type of ultimate Jew?
- What is the play on words with "King Shlomo" that he uses at the end of the piece?

## Some General Questions to ask Chanichim:

- Is it a useful exercise to compare the different types of people described here to different denominations of Judaism?
- Is it really possible to do two of these at the same time? What contradictions might someone face when trying to balance personal vs national, Jewish vs humanity, humanity vs animals...etc?
- Do you think other Jewish philosophers would agree with everything Rav Kook says? Where might they disagree?

## Some personal Questions to ask Chanichim:

- Do you identify with any of the people Rav Kook describes?
- Do you know or look up to anyone that embodies more than one of these values?
- If you think Rav Kook is trying to define an ultimate Jew here – then do you think he is right?

## A Related Story: "Moshiach's hat" - Rabbi Yitzchok Feigenbaum

It was the night of the geulah, and in every single shteibel, sounds of Torah could be heard, coming from every kind of Yeidel. This one in English, some in Hebrew, some in Yiddish, some saying pshat, and some saying chiddush.

And up in shomayim, the Aibishter decreed, "The time has come for My children to be freed.

Rouse the Mashiach from his heavenly berth, have him get in his chariot and head down to Earth."

The Moshiach got dressed, and with a heart full of glee, went down to the Earth, and entered the first shteibel he did see.

"I'm the Moshiach, Hashem has heard your plea, your geulah has come, it is time to go free!"

They all stopped their learning, this was quite a surprise, And they looked at him carefully with piercing sharp eyes.

"He's not the Mashiach!" said one with a grin, "Just look at his hat, at the pinches and brim!"

"That's right!", cried another with a grimace and a frown, "Whoever heard of Mashiach with a brim that is down?!"

"Well", thought Mashiach, "If that is the rule, I'll turn my brim up before I go to the next shule!"

So he walked on right over to the next shule in town, confident to be accepted since his brim was no longer down.

"I'm the Mashiach!", he cried as he began to enter. But the Jews there wanted to know first, if he was left, right, or center.

"Your clothes are so black!" they cried out in a fright. "You can't be Mashiach -- you're much too far right!"

If you want to be Mashiach, you must be properly outfitted." So they replaced his black hat with a kipa that was knitted.

Wearing his new kipa, Mashiach went out and he said, "No difference to me what I wear on my head."

So he went to the next shule, for his mission was dear, But he was getting a bit frustrated with the Yidden down here.

"I'm the Mashiach!" he cried, and they all stopped to stare. And a complete eerie stillness filled up the air.

"You're the Mashiach?! Just imagine that. Whoever heard of Mashiach without a black hat?!"

"But I do have a hat!" the Mashiach then said. So he pulled it right out and plunked it down on his head.

Then the Shule started laughing, and one said, "Where's your kop? You can't have Mashiach with a brim that is up!

If you want to be Mashiach, and be accepted in this town, put some pinches in your hat, and turn that brim down!"

Mashiach walked out and said, "I guess my time hasn't really come, I'll just have to return to where I came from.

So he went to his chariot, but as he began to enter, all sorts of Jews appeared, from left, right, and center.

"Please wait, do not leave, it's all THEIR fault!" they said, And they pointed to each other, and to what was on each other's head.

Mashiach just looked sad, and said, "You don't understand." And then started up his chariot to get out of this land.

"Yes, it's very wonderful, that all of you learn Torah, But you seem to have forgotten, a crucial part of our mesorah."

"What does he mean? What's he talking about?" And they all looked bewildered, and all began to shout.

Mashiach looked back and answered, "The first place to start, is to shut up your mouths, and open up your heart.

To each of you, certain Yidden seem too frum or too frei but ALL Yidden are beloved, in the Aibeshter's eye."

And on his way up he shouted, "If you want me to come, try working a little harder on some ahavas chinam."