

## And Elokim saw the light that it was good. (1:4)

The *Talmud Yoma* 38b states: “Rabbi Elazar says: it is worth for the world to be created even for (the benefit it derived from) one *tzaddik*, righteous person.” This is derived from the above *pasuk*, “And *Elokim* saw the light that it was good.” There is no “good” like a *tzaddik*. We also find in *Mishlei* 10:25, *V’tzaddik yesod olam*, “A righteous person is the foundation of the world.” We now have some inkling of the great merit that a *tzaddik* has in this world. One *tzaddik* – not a world of *tzaddikim* – only one, single, righteous person makes the entire world’s creation meaningful! The entire world with all its creatures and all humanity are all here because of the *tzaddik*. He is the purpose of creation.

With this compelling statement fresh in our minds, we may begin to understand the overarching importance of reaching out to unaffiliated Jews, to bring them closer under the *kanfei haShechinah*, wings of the Divine Presence. **Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita**, observes that if the world could have endured six thousand years just for the sake of one *tzaddik*, certainly we should expend every possible effort to reach out to Jews of all stripes and persuasions.

Furthermore, man is a microcosm of the world. He is an *olam katan*, tiny simile of the world. Thus, he must view himself in a similar perspective. As the entire world is worthy of creation just for the benefit of one *tzaddik*, so, too, should a person take great joy and feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment for every positive action which he executes. That one activity quite possibly makes “him” worth the effort.

*Rav Gamliel* quotes **Horav Nota Freund, Shlita**, who explains the *pasuk*, *Kasis la’maor*, “Crushed for the purpose for lighting” (*Shemos* 27:20), which is a reference to the olive oil used for the *Menorah*. *Chazal* derive from here that only *maor* – the oil used for the *Menorah*, for illumination, must be extracted from olives by crushing them, using the first oil that emerges for the *Menorah*. Concerning *Menachos*, the oil mixed with flour for the Meal-offering, one may use oil that has been ground up. Applying a homiletic twist, *Rav Freund* interprets the *pasuk*: *kasis la’maor* – “crushed for illumination.” One who is struck by Hashem, who is subject to a difficult challenge, should be *la’maor*; it should serve as a source of inspiration that elevates him. He should never allow the *kasis*, the crushing effect, to cause *menachos*, pain, sadness, and *menachos*, “resting,” whereby one disappears into a cocoon of hopelessness, going into emotional hibernation.

As *Chazal* posit that the world could likely have been created for one person, so, too, should a person believe that his own entire existence was worthwhile as a result of the good deeds which he carries out .

Concerning the meaning of *Tzaddik yesod olam*, I recently came across the following statement attributed to **Horav Shlomo Zevihler, zl**. Two great *Admorim*, who were both very righteous, distinguished leaders who devoted their lives to shepherding their flock: *Horav Yisrael, zl, m’Huseitin*; and *Horav Shlomo, zl, m’Zevihl*. *Rav Yisrael* was blessed with great wealth, while *Rav*

Shlomo lived a life of abject poverty. *Rav* Shlomo once commented, “There are two types of *tzaddikim*. The *tzaddik hador*, righteous leader of his generation, does just that, guide his generation. There is also the *tzaddik yesod olam*, who acts very much like a *yesod*, foundation, who goes unnoticed, sort of buried in the ground – like a foundation.” We must remember, however, that without the foundation, the entire edifice comes crashing down.

One cannot write concerning the importance of reaching out to every Jew without making mention of the *Ponevezer Rav*, **Horav Yosef Kahaneman, zl**. He was a Torah giant in whose heart burned a fiery love for every Jew. He would say excitedly, “Of course, I want whole-hearted sincere Jews – one hundred percent perfect Jews – but I also want all one hundred percent of all of the world’s Jews, that none of them go lost; I am not giving up on a single one! Just as a Jew may never give up hope, so, too, are we also forbidden to give up on a simple Jew, no matter who he is.”

A close student of his related, “I once saw the *Rebbe* in the middle of a throng of irreligious, assimilated Jews, who surrounded him with loving and admiring looks. Burning with curiosity, I went over to him and asked what approach he used to reach out to them. Smiling, he replied, ‘I told them that they are Jews, more precious than anything else, and that they were just disguising themselves to the point that they are even maintaining their disguise towards themselves.’ Thus, I told them, ‘Remove your masks! *Taire briderlach*, beloved brothers, cast off your foreign garb. In time, many of them, indeed, shed their masks and reverted to being traditional Jews.’”