

Few Jewish figures, whether biblical, historical, or contemporary, have made changes in Jewish history, perspectives and values, and my own Jewish life as major and manifest as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneersohn has made. As a result of the Rebbe's mantra of total equality among Jews, valuable advice regarding all facets of life, and prioritization of active outreach to all Jews through the Chabad movement, the entire world has been changed for the better. Additionally, by inspiring my fellow Jews to be proud of their Jewish heritage and encouraging them to grow closer to Hashem as the Rebbe did, I too can make major positive changes in the world.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe has made an indescribably profound impact on modern Jewish history. Few can imagine a single college campus lacking a Chabad house, and seldom is there a Jew on any level of observance who has not heard of the Chabad movement. This can be mostly attributed to the Rebbe, who, ever since his ascent to the position of leader of the Chabad movement in 1951, has sent thousands of emissaries to facilitate countless Chabad houses throughout the world. As a result, myriads of Jews have become closer to their Jewish roots through the inspiration that the Rebbe's outreach has offered. From the moment of his arrival in the United States in 1941, the Rebbe established several Lubavitch organizations such as *Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch* and *Kehot Publication Society* which spread *Chasidic* philosophies and his own Torah knowledge in an accessible manner throughout the country. Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe became recognized as a major Torah scholar whose commentaries, explanations, and opinions still hold a major presence in Torah education to this day. Clearly, the impact that the Lubavitcher Rebbe has made in modern Jewish history is undeniably impressive.

Once the Lubavitcher Rebbe took hold of the Chabad movement, a new era of tolerance among Jews began. Gone were the days that religious Jews would shun the secular and withhold

from them desperately needed kindness, and gone was the metaphorical partition separating Jews of varying levels of religiosity. The Rebbe insisted that as Jews, all of us possess souls which ultimately stem from the same one G-d. Indeed, a Jew who might not even know of his Jewish identity is treated with the same love and affection by Hashem as even the most pious of rabbis. This revolutionary assertion made its way throughout the world as the Chabad movement spread, toppling the distorted idea that nonreligious Jews were deficient and thus undeserving of spiritual attention. This veritable revamping of contemporary Jewish values, from a mindset of segregation and abandonment to one of outreach and benevolence, has inspired the founding of many other similar Jewish outreach organizations throughout the world.

In late 2015, I began a process of becoming a more observant Jew. In early 2016, when I became affiliated and involved with the Chabad movement, their philosophy that all Jews are equal and that every Jew has tremendous spiritual potential sent ripples throughout my heart and soul. Before learning and adhering to these teachings, I decided that finding a new group of more observant friends would be an effective method in sheltering me from the secular influences of my current social surroundings. But as I began to adopt the Rebbe's notion of equality into my lifestyle, I knew that my mission must be to spread Jewish practice and values to my friends and family. With Hashem's help, I have become relatively successful, encouraging my friends and family to don *Tefillin*, to say blessings before consuming food and drink, and to light *Shabbos* candles, to name a few examples. Without the knowledge that all Jews have great potential in growing closer to Hashem, I would never have made any of these spiritual impacts on my friends and family. Truly, I have become a changed person as a direct result of the Rebbe's influence.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe's impact on modern Jewish history, values and thought, and on myself are all undeniably incredible and revolutionary. Without the Rebbe's dispersing of the

Chabad movement to nearly all ends of the planet, hundreds of thousands of Jews today would remain in spiritual exiles, possibly never discovering the true light of Hashem and the love He has for His people regardless of their spiritual standing. As the Chabad movement and teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe become even more widespread, Jews can become once again united with their heritage and aid in bringing the ultimate redemption speedily in our days.