

# RELATING TO G-D BY RELATING TO MAN

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**Question:** *I have a question regarding the concept of unconditional love. For example, how can it be that Hashem (G-d) really loves the righteous and the wicked the same? Or is it that Hashem loves the righteous more and unconditional love means the concept of Hashem waiting for us to improve our ways (do Teshuva) equally. And what about the wicked person that never changes?*

**Answer:** Hi! Thank you for your really interesting question. Many years ago I heard a wonderful principle from Rabbi Chaim Mintz shlita, the Mashgiach (spiritual guidance counselor) at the Yeshiva of Staten Island. He said the following idea: The most important thing in our lives is our relationship with G-d. But G-d is non-physical, and not at all visible to our senses, so it's very hard for us to grasp that relationship or value it properly. Therefore, G-d in his wisdom gave us many types of relationships between human beings, things we can understand, experience, and appreciate. And each of those relationships can help us also grasp a parallel relationship with G-d.

That's what we mean when we say that G-d is our king, or our master, our husband (as in Song of Songs), or even our neighbor (that's how the word shekhina, his "Presence", translates), so to speak.

And one of the most important of these connections is that G-d is our father, and we are his child.

Don't think that these connections are "imitations" of our human relationships. They are more real; these are our eternal ways of relating to G-d. But the parallel human relationships help us to feel them and deal with them. G-d is infinite, and there are infinite aspects to his love. These are some of the ways we can understand it.

Now these relationships are different from each other in many ways. One way is that some of them are more dependent on our good behavior, augmented by it, and (so to speak) weakened when we do things to harm the relationship.

But the relationship of father to son is not like that. It is a "blood" relationship, so to speak – I have to overuse that phrase here! – and we will always be his children, even if we are disobedient. He will always be our father and care for us, though (and may this not have to happen) sometimes he will need to do it with "tough love".

The truth is that all of our relationships with G-d are unbreakable. In the end he will guide us to build each of them to the maximum extent possible.

Best wishes,

Michoel Reach