



Song of Holiness

Rabbi Edward M. Feinstein

A hasid went to see his rebbe. It was usually a very long journey, but he returned home after just one night. When his friends asked why he returned so quickly, he explained that what he had learned along the way made the journey unnecessary.

I spent that first night at an inn along the road. There were two peasants drinking. One said to the other: Pavel, am I your friend?

Of course you are my friend, his companion responded.

Do you love me?

Of course I love you, we are friends!

Do you know what hurts me?

How can I know what hurts you? You are you and I am I. I can never know what hurts you!

But if you don't know what hurts me, how can you say that you love me?

If we would ask God to know us, then we must know the one who sits beside us. If we would ask God to know what hurts us, then we must know what hurts the one who sits beside us. Only in knowing the other, can God know us. Only in healing the other, can God heal us. We pray in community. We pray as a community.

Rav Avraham Kook, former chief rabbi of Israel, taught: "There is one who sings the songs of his own self, and in himself finds everything. Then there is one who sings the song of his people and cleaves with a tender love to Israel. And there is one whose spirit is in all worlds, and with all of them does he join in his song. The song of the self, the song of one's people, the song of man, the song of the world — they all merge within him continually. And this song in its completeness and fullness, rises to become the song of holiness."