



A new six-session course from the  
Rohr Jewish Learning Institute

# Paradigm SHIFT

*Transformational Life Teachings  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*




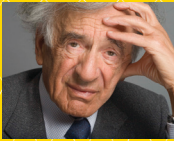
## PARADIGM SHIFT

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**K**nown to many simply as “the Rebbe,” Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson assumed leadership of the Chabad Lubavitch movement in 1950, when it consisted of a small group of European refugees struggling to rebuild their lives after the war. Over the next four decades, the Rebbe established a worldwide network of educational, social, and religious institutions. Under his leadership, from a band of survivors, Chabad grew into a global movement that moved out of the shadow of the Holocaust and embraced a new future and a new world. One of the foremost Jewish leaders of our time, the Rebbe embraced all Jews, regardless of their beliefs or affiliation, and touched the lives of countless individuals across the social spectrum. Despite his passing in 1994, his legacy continues to live on through his teachings and through the work of his emissaries whom he charged with bringing the light of Judaism to every corner of the globe.

The Rohr JLI has undertaken the important task of bringing the Rebbe’s intellectual and spiritual legacy to the thousands of students who attend its courses worldwide. The release of the course, *Paradigm Shift: Transformational Life Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*, coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Rebbe’s passing. In a series of carefully crafted and tactfully presented lessons, the Rebbe’s philosophy is deconstructed and explored from a sweeping range of views, and is then skillfully rebuilt to showcase the Rebbe’s insights into life and his profound messages that so resonate with mankind.

The course addresses the following questions: What are the Rebbe’s central teachings and contributions to Judaism and society? What was his understanding of the human being and what were his aspirations for humanity? What accounts for the continued success of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement? And most importantly—how can we apply these insights toward living a more purposeful life? 



**ELIE WIESEL**  
*Nobel Prize laureate,  
noted author,  
professor, and  
political activist*

I KNOW OF NO ONE WHO HAS LEFT THE REBBE WITHOUT BEING DEEPLY AFFECTED, IF NOT CHANGED, BY THEIR ENCOUNTER. TIME IN HIS PRESENCE BEGINS RUNNING AT A DIFFERENT PACE. YOU FEEL INSPIRED, YOU FEEL SELF-EXAMINED. YOU ARE MADE TO WONDER ABOUT THE QUEST FOR MEANING WHICH OUGHT TO BE YOURS. IN HIS PRESENCE NOTHING IS SUPERFICIAL, NOR IS IT ARTIFICIAL. IN HIS PRESENCE YOU COME CLOSER IN TOUCH WITH YOUR INNER CENTER OF GRAVITY.

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## LESSON 1: SEEING A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN

We each have a “garden” in our lives, an area where our values are secure and our belief system is uncontested: our families, our friends and the things we cherish. In the spiritual sense, too, most people have an area in their lives they designate as sacred: the synagogue, moments of study, and special days on the calendar. In this conception, however, only a part of our lives is good and sacred. A wall of separation encircles our “garden,” and everything that lies beyond seems to be beyond salvation. The Rebbe, however, taught that there is no divide between G-d and the material world, between the Torah and reality, between goodness and each aspect of our lives. The entire universe and all that transpires are expressions of G-d’s “garden.” This lesson explores how the Rebbe pinpointed mundane, even negative phenomena of this world, and demonstrated that below their surface lies a wellspring of goodness, holiness, and heightened potential. When one adopts this outlook everything in life takes on a positive hue, and the individual is positioned to live a happier and more positive life.

## LESSON 2: REALIZING YOUR POTENTIAL

Many have written about the Rebbe’s unconditional love and acceptance of people, but at the same time, it is widely documented that the Rebbe made relentless demands for their betterment and growth. This lesson explores this unique combination. The Rebbe defined a person not by his manifest failures and weaknesses, but by the soul’s absolute perfection and unlimited potential. The challenge is to reveal this perfection; but even when this has yet to happen, the internal core of perfection in every human being is what defines us. This philosophy underlies the Rebbe’s teachings about how to view ourselves and how to relate to others. Many of the Rebbe’s ideas and projects are rooted in recognizing this perfect soul as the real person—most notably, his campaign to increase love amongst people, his philosophical understanding of repentance, and his insistence that doing even one mitzvah is not religious hypocrisy.



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## LESSON 3: MINDING YOUR MISSION

One of the primary innovations of the Rebbe was that of sending emissaries—young men and women whom he charged with teaching and inspiring others in all corners of the globe. The Rebbe also taught that *each person* is an emissary of G-d and possesses a unique mission. The soul in each of us renders us immutably similar, but each of us has unique talents and circumstances that make us different from our fellow. G-d did not create these distinctions for naught, but so that each individual should realize his or her true destiny. Every person has an exclusive mission that he or she has been uniquely empowered to fulfill. This is true not only of the individual: men and women each have a unique mission, as do children, as do the elderly. It is our responsibility to identify these talents and utilize them to the utmost. This reality underscored the Rebbe's strong push for diversity and individuality, even as the diversity is rooted in an underlying unity.

## LESSON 4: SYNCHING WITH THE DIVINE

What is the secret of Chabad's sustained expansion and success following the Rebbe's passing? A possible answer to this revolves around a larger question about the ideal relationship between rebbe and Chasid. How did the Rebbe respond to claims that Chasidim are weak if they are constantly consulting with their Rebbe? This, in turn, hinges on a broader question: Who is the ideal religious person—one who is an unquestioning follower who submits completely to the will of a higher power, or one who scrutinizes religious beliefs and tests their validity before using them to cultivate a personal relationship with G-d? This lesson questions our perception of religion and what it means to be a servant of G-d.



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## LESSON 5: REDEFINING FAILURE

The second half of the twentieth century was marked by a resurgence of Jews who re-embraced their Jewish heritage. This lesson explores how the Rebbe responded to this novel development in the orbit of Jewish life. He taught that failure is not an anomaly in the design of creation, but the tool through which the highest form of success can be achieved. Armed with the belief that no person ever falls outside of G-d's providence, the Rebbe encouraged us to never despair or consider ourselves failures. Although we may have erred, it is all part of a process that leads to a much better place. We all make mistakes. Such is life. And the Rebbe explained that, in a certain sense, it was destined to be that way.

## LESSON 6: OPENING OUR EYES

The Rebbe continuously emphasized the historic and unique role of our generation, and taught us to seize the moment to usher in an era of everlasting peace and goodness. Pointing to the revolutionary changes that have taken place in technology, in politics, and in the human spirit, the Rebbe observed that the overall goal of creation is finally within reach and that the world is finally ready for redemption. This lesson addresses how we might take advantage of this unprecedented time in history to energize ourselves for the sprint to the finish line.



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