



REBUILDING THE BEIT HAMIKDASH WITH LOVE: A PARENT-CHILD STUDY GUIDE

Tisha B'av is a day of conflicting emotions. On the one hand, it is the saddest day of the year; on the other, it is a day that brings hope. By focusing on the causes of the destruction of the Batei Mikdash, we can learn to improve ourselves, which will ultimately lead to the building of the third Beit HaMikdash.

Let us then ask the question: Why did Hashem feel that we, the Jewish People, were no longer worthy of having the Beit HaMikdash — of having Hashem live among us? What led to this sad reality of living in a world that lacks a strong sense of Hashem's presence?

The Gemara, in *Yoma* 9b, famously explains the reason for the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash:

... אבל מקדש שני, שהיו עוסקין בתורה ובמצוות ובגמילות חסדים,
מפני מה חרב? מפני שהייתה בו שנאת חינם. ללמדך ששקולה שנאת
חינם כנגד שלש עבירות: עבודה זרה, גילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים.

However, considering that the people during the Second Temple period were engaged in Torah study, observance of mitzvot, and

acts of kindness, and that they did not perform the sinful acts that were performed in the First Temple, why was the Second Temple destroyed? It was destroyed because there was senseless hatred during that period. This comes to teach you that the sin of senseless hatred is equivalent to the three severe transgressions: Idol worship, illicit relations, and bloodshed.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1. What are some senseless reasons that a person may dislike someone — in his class or in his bunk etc.?**
- 2. How can we shift our feelings to not have negative feelings toward another person?**
- 3. Can you think of a time when someone seemed to “just not like you”? How did it make you feel?**

ואם נחרבנו ונחרב העולם עמנו על ידי שנאת חינוס, נשוב להיבנות והעולם עמנו יבנה על ידי אהבת חינוס.

If the reason for our and the world's desolation is because of baseless hatred, then we should work to rebuild ourselves and the world through baseless love.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook, Orot Hakodesh Vol. III 323-324

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you think Rav Kook means by the term “*ahavat chinam*” — “baseless love.”
2. What actions can we take to express to other people that we care about them — even without any particular reason?

The basis for the mitzvah to love and care about others is, of course, the pasuk, *ve’ahavta l’rei’acha kamocho* — love your fellow person like yourself. The great importance of this mitzvah can be seen from the following story in the Gemara:

שוב מעשה בגוי אֶחָד שָׁבָא לְפָנֵי שַׁמַּי. אָמַר לוֹ: גִּיְרָנִי עַל מַנְתְּ שִׁתְּלַמְדֵנִי כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כּוֹלָה כְּשֶׁאֲנִי עוֹמֵד עַל רֶגֶל אַחַת! דִּחְפוּ בְּאַמַּת הַבְּנֵי שְׂבִידוֹ. בָּא לְפָנֵי הִלֵּל, גִּיְרִיָּהּ. אָמַר לוֹ: דַּעְלָךְ סִנֵּי לְחֻבְרָךְ לֹא תַעֲבִיד — זֶה הֵיא כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כּוֹלָה, וְאִידָךְ פִּירוּשָׁהּ הוּא, זֵיל גִּמּוּר.

There was another incident involving one non-Jewish person who came before Shammai and said to Shammai: Convert me, but only if you teach me the entire Torah while I am standing on one foot. Shammai pushed him away with the builder’s ruler in his hand. The same non-Jewish person came before Hillel (and made the same request). Hillel converted him and said to him: That which is hateful to you, do not do to another; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation. Go study.

Shabbat 31a

Questions for Discussion:

1. Hillel’s teaching (above) — “that which is hateful to you, do not do to another,” seems to be the same idea as “Love your fellow person like yourself.” Why do you think Hillel expresses it in a different way than the pasuk?
2. What do you think Hillel meant when he said, “that is the entire Torah” — Isn’t *ve’ahavta l’rei’acha kamocho* only one mitzvah out of 613?!

מצוה על כל אדם לאהוב את כל אחד ואחד מישראל כגופו שנאמר ואהבת לרעך כמוך, לפיכך צריך לספר בשבחו ולחוס על ממונו כאשר הוא חס על ממון עצמו ורוצה בכבוד עצמו.

Each man is commanded to love each and every one of Israel as himself as [Leviticus 19:18] states: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Therefore, one should speak the praises of [others] and show concern for their money just as he is concerned with his own money and seeks his own honor.

Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Personal Development 6:3

מצות עשה של דבריהם לבקר חולים ולנחם אבלים ולהוציא המת ולהכניס הכלה וללוות האורחים ... וכן לשמח הכלה והחתן ולסעודם בכל צרכיהם ואלו הן גמילות חסדים שבגופו שאין להם שיעור אף על פי שכל מצות אלו מדבריהם הרי הן בכלל ואהבת לרעך כמוך.

It is a positive commandment of Rabbinic origin to visit the sick, comfort mourners, to prepare for a funeral, prepare a bride, accompany guests ... and also to bring joy to a bride and groom and help them in all their needs. These are deeds of kindness that one performs with his body that have no limit. Even though all of these commandments are of Rabbinic status, they are included in “Love your neighbor as yourself”...

Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Mourning 14:1

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to Maimonides (Rambam), what are some of the specific actions we should do to express our love to our fellow Jew?
2. Have you been able to do any of these acts of kindness over the past month (even with the COVID-19 challenges)?
3. Think of ways that you can do one or more of them in the next month — what did you come up with?
4. What types of things can we do that express our concern for someone else’s property?
5. Did you ever return a lost object to someone? In your opinion, is the mitzvah of *hashavat aveidah* a fulfillment of *ve’ahavta l’rei’acha kamocho* as well? Explain.

ואהבת לרעך כמוך ר"ל .. א' שיאהב אותי באמת לא בזיוף, ב' שיתנהג בו כבוד תמיד כי כן ראוי להיות וכמאמר חז"ל, כבוד חברך כמורא רבך, ג' שידרש שלומי תמיד כי כן ראוי לרעים אהובים להיות בשלום תמיד ולדרוש איש בשלום רעהו, ד' שישתתף בצערך, ה' שיקבל אותי בסבר פנים יפות כשאבא לביתך, ו' שידון אותי לכף זכות בכל דבר, ז' שיתנדב בגופו באיזה טרחה קטנה בשבילי והוא ילוני בעמלו לפעמים

בדבר שלא יעמל בו הרבה, ח' שיתנדב להושיע לי בדבר מועט מממונו לפעמים בעת שאצטרך בהלוואה או במתנה דבר קטן ולא ימנע ממני שאלה אחת קטנה כדרך טוב איש חונן ומלוה, ט' שלא יתגאה עלי. "And you shall love your fellow person as yourself." For example ... he should truly and sincerely love him; Second, he should always treat him with respect; Third, he should always seek his well-being; Fourth, he should share in his sorrow; Fifth, he should welcome him with a warm smile (be-sever panim yafot) when he visits his home; Sixth, he should always judge him favorably (le-khaf zekhut) in every matter; Seventh, he should gladly be willing go through a little trouble for his sake; Eighth, that he should help him with a little money when he needs a loan or a small gift, and he shouldn't deny him some minor request; Ninth, he should not act arrogantly toward him. Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865), Haketav Vehakabalah, Vayikra ch. 19

Questions for Discussion:

1. Have you recently had the opportunity to help another person, even if it meant giving of your time or money? What help did he/she need?
2. Can you think of someone who would benefit from being greeted with a nice smile?

אמר הה"ק ז"ל שלמד אהבת ישראל מכפרי אחד שהי' במסובה עם כפריים אחרים, וכטוב לבו ביין אמר לרעהו אהבת אותי או לא. ויענהו אהבתיך למאד. ואומר הכפרי אתה תאמר אהבתיני ולא אדע מה יחסר לי, הלא אם באמת אהבתיני. הידעת מחסורי, ויחרש ולא דבר מאוס, מזה למד כי אהבת ישראל הוא להרגיש כל מחסורם ולסבול כל מכאובם.

I learned from a non-Jew how to properly love a fellow Jew. Once I passed by a tavern and saw two non-Jewish gentlemen hugging each other. One asked his friend, "Do you really love me?" His friend replied, "certainly — quite sincerely." The first person said, "How could you say you really love me if you don't know what I'm missing?!" At that time, I learned that no man from Israel really loves his friend unless he knows what he is missing.

R. Moshe Leib Erbllich of Sasov, Torat HaRamal, Likutim 48

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to Rav Moshe Leib of Sasov, in order to properly fulfill *ve'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocho*, what does a person need to understand about other people?
2. Think of someone you know — and then try to think of three things that person needs. How can you help that person get what he/she needs?

Just like you love yourself [naturally] and not for the purpose of fulfilling any mitzvah, similarly, you should love your fellow Jew [naturally] and not just for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah [of ve'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocho].

R. Natan Tzvi Finkel, The Alter of Slabodka

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to the Alter of Slabodka, what does the word "*kamocho*" (like yourself) teach us?
2. According to this view, what should be the main reason that we love other people?

כתיב לא תקום ולא תטור את בני עמך היך עבידא הוה מקטע קופד ומחת סכינא לידי תחזור ותמחי לידיה.

It states, "Do not take revenge and do not bear a grudge." What is an example? Someone was cutting meat and mistakenly cut his hand with the knife. Would he in turn cut the other hand?

Yerushalmi, Nedarim 9:4

Questions for Discussion:

1. How does the parable brought by the Yerushalmi explain the reason behind the prohibition against taking revenge against another Jew?
2. Can the same parable be used to explain the reason for the mitzvah of *ve'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocho*?

והנה, על ידי קיום הדברים הנזכרים לעיל, להיות גופו נבזה ונמאס בעיניו, רק שמחתו תהיה שמחת הנפש לבדה, הרי זו דרך ישרה וקלה לבא לידי קיום מצות "ואהבת לרעך כמוך" לכל נפש מישראל, למגדול ועד קטן. כי מאחר שגופו נמאס ומתעב אצלו, והנפש והרוח – מי יודע

גדולתן ומעלתן בשורשן ומקורן באלקים חיים. בשגם שכולן מתאימות ואב אחד לכלנה, ולכן נקראו כל ישראל אחים ממש, מצד שורש נפשם בה' אחד, רק שהגופים מחולקים. ולכן העושים גופם עיקר ונפשם טפלה, אי אפשר להיות אהבה ואחוה אמתית ביניהם.

The command to love every Jew flows from understanding the fundamental principle that unifies all Jews. Even though there is a physical separation between the bodies of the Jewish People, their souls are united at their divine source, because He is like a father to everyone. Only a person who relates to his soul as having primary importance, and his body as secondary, can sincerely feel love toward every Jew. However, in the case of those who give major consideration to their bodies, while regarding their souls as of secondary importance, they cannot feel true love toward their fellow Jew.

Sefer Tanya, ch. 32

Question for Discussion:

According to the *Tanya*, only someone who views his soul as primary and his body as secondary can truly love another Jew. Why is this so?

If a Jewish person loves another person as he loves himself, then the love is doubled — for him and for his fellow person. The word “אהבה” (love) multiplied by two is the same gematriya as the name of Hashem — שם הוי”ה (the word אהבה which equals 13 multiplied by 2 = 26). And this is the meaning of the pasuk, “love your fellow person like yourself” — if there is a double love — your fellow person and you, then “I am Hashem” — the name of Hashem is the result.

The Maggid of Trisk

I appoint the heavens and the earth to testify about me that my feelings of love are great, and I literally feel love with all my heart and all my soul, for our whole nation and all of

its individuals and all of its groups, because I believe with complete faith that every part of the nation is an integral and unique part of the holy and wonderful structure that is the Jewish People in its entirety.

Rav Kook, Ma’amarei Hara’ayah Vol. II pg. 523

Questions for Discussion:

1. Did Rav Kook love every Jew — even the sinners?
2. Why or why not? What is the reason he gives?

Before a person begins to daven in shul, he should accept upon himself the mitzvah of “Love your fellow person like yourself.” He should have in mind to love all of the Jewish people, each and every one, like himself, because through this, his prayers will go up as part of the prayers of all of the Jewish People, and then it will be able to rise up high and be effective ...

The Arizal quoted in Introduction to Sha’ar Hakavanot

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to the Arizal, what is the connection between loving all Jews and davening to Hashem?
2. Do you think it would take you a long time or a short time before davening to think about the mitzvah of “Love your fellow person like yourself”? Why?

Let us hope that we are able to fulfill the mitzvah of *ve’ahavta l’rei’acha kamocha* and strengthen our relationship with others — caring for them and helping them. Through this, please God, we will witness the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash — soon and in our own time.

Do you know the laws of Tisha B'av?

Find thousands of shiurim at yutorah.org/moadim-u-zmanim/holidays/tisha-bav