

Does Tolerance Lead to Indifference?
Tisha B'av as the Antidote to Indifference

Tolerance is another word for indifference.

- *W. Somerset Maugham*

The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And, the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference. Because of indifference one dies before one actually dies.

- *Elie Wiesel, tz"l*

"It may well be that we will have to repent in this generation. Not merely for the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit around and say, "Wait on time."

- *Martin Luther King Jr., A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches'*

1) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Taanit 30b

R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: Anyone who eats or drinks on the Ninth of Ab is as if he ate and drank on the Day of Atonement.

R. Akiva says: Anyone who does work on the Ninth of Ab will never see in his work any sign of blessing.

And the Sages say: Anyone who does work on the Ninth of Ab and does not mourn for Jerusalem will not share in her joy, as it is said, *Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all that mourn for her.*

From here they said, anyone who mourns for Jerusalem merits to share in her joy, and anyone who does not mourn for her will not share in her joy.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת תענית ל' ב

רשב"ג אומר כל האוכל ושותה בט' באב כאילו אוכל ושותה ביוה"כ
ר"ע אומר כל העושה מלאכה בתשעה באב אינו רואה סימן ברכה לעולם
וחכ"א כל העושה מלאכה בט' באב ואינו מתאבל על ירושלים אינו רואה בשמחתה שנא' (ישעיהו סו, י) שמחו את ירושלים וגילו בה כל אוהביה
שישו אתה משוב כל המתאבלים עליה מכאן אמרו כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה בשמחתה ושאינו מתאבל על ירושלים אינו רואה בשמחתה

Questions for consideration:

- What is the difference between the position of Rebbe Akiva and the Sages? Are they agreeing, disagreeing or saying different things
- What is the conclusion of the Gemara? Why do you think one must mourn for Jerusalem?

2) Numbers 13:26 – 14:4

26 They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land.

27 They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. 28 But the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan."

30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

במדבר יג:כו – ז:ז

כו וַיָּלְכוּ וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֶל-מִדְבַּר פָּאֲרָן--קְדֻשָּׁה; וַיֹּשִׁיבוּ אֹתָם דְּבַר וְאֶת-כָּל-הָעֵדָה, וַיִּרְאוּם אֶת-פְּרֵי הָאָרֶץ. כז וַיִּסְפְּרוּ-לוֹ, וַיֹּאמְרוּ, בְּאָזְנוֹ, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתָּנוּ; וְגַם זָבַת חֵלֶב וְדִבְשׁ, הוּא--וְזֶה-פְרִיָּהּ. כח אָפֶס כִּי-עֵז הָעַם, הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ; וְהָעָרִים, בְּצֻרוֹת גְּדֹלַת מָאֵד, וְגַם-יְלָדֵי הָעֵמֶק, רְאִינוּ שָׁם. כט עַמְלֹק יוֹשֵׁב, בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב; וְהַחִתִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי וְהָאֱמֹרִי, יוֹשֵׁב בְּהָר, וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב עַל-הַיַּם, וְעַל יַד הַיַּרְדֵּן. ל וַיְהִי סֵלֶב לְבָב אֶת-הָעַם, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה; וַיֹּאמֶר, עֲלֵה נַעֲלָה וַיְרַשְׁנוּ אֹתָהּ--כִּי-יָכוֹל נוֹכַח, לָהּ.

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." 32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. 33 We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."
1 That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud.
2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! 3 Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" 4 And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

לא והאנשים אשר-עלו עמו, אמרו, לא נוכל לעלות אל-העם: פי-הזק הוא, ממנו.
לב ויצאיו דבת הארץ, אשר תרו אתה, אל-בני ישראל, לאמר: הארץ אשר עברנו בה לתור אתה, ארץ אכלת יושביה הוא, וכל-העם אשר-ראינו בתוכה, אנשי מדות. לג ושם ראינו את-הנפילים בני ענק--מן-הנפילים; ונהי בעינינו כחגבים, וכן היינו בעיניהם.
א וידבר יהוה, אל-משה ואל-אהרן לאמר. ב נשא, את-ראש בני קהת, מתוך בני לוי-- למשפחתם, לבית אבתם. ג מן שלשים שנה ומעלה, ועד בן-חמשים שנה--כל-בא, לצבא, לעשות מלאכה, באהל מועד. ד זאת עבדת בני-קהת, באהל מועד--קדש, הקדשים. ה ובא אהרן ובניו, בנסע המהמה, והורדו, את פרכת המסד; וכסו-בה--את, ארון העדת

Questions for consideration:

- Please look closely at verses 30 and 31 – what is the difference between what Caleb said and what the other spies said?
- Why do the people wish to return to Egypt?

3) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Taanit 29a

And it is written, "And the whole community raised [their voices], and they gave their voices and the nation cried that night (Numbers 14:1)." Rabba said, "Rabbi Yochanan said, '(That very day was the ninth of Av Said to them the Holy One, Blessed be he, 'You wept a weeping for no reason, (therefore) I will institute for you a weeping for generations.'"

תלמוד בבלי מסכת תענית כט.

וכתיב (במדבר יד, א) ותשא כל העדה ויתנו את קולם ויבכו העם בלילה ההוא אמר רבה אמר ר' יוחנן (אותו היום ערב) תשעה באב היה אמר להם הקב"ה אתם בכיתם בכיה של חנם ואני קובע לכם בכיה לדורות

Questions for consideration:

- What is the connection between the incident with the Spies and the 9th of Av?
- Why do you think God is particularly bothered by this incident? What is the sin of the Jewish people in this text?

4) Lamentations 3:1-18

(1) I am the man that has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.
(2) He has led me and caused me to walk in darkness and not in light.
(3) Surely against me He has turned His hand repeatedly all day.
(4) He has worn out my flesh and my skin; He has broken my bones.
(5) He has built against me, and compassed me with gall and travail.
(6) He has made me to dwell in dark places, as those that have been long dead.
(7) He has fenced me in and I cannot go out; He has made my chain heavy.
(8) **Even when I cry and call out, He has shut out my prayer.**
(9) He has enclosed my ways with hewn stone, He has made my paths crooked.
(10) He is to me as a bear lying in wait, as a lion in secret places.
(11) He has turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces; He has made me desolate.
(12) He has bent His bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.
(13) He has caused the arrows of His quiver to enter into my reins.
(14) I have become a derision to all my people, and their song all the day.

איכה פרק ג

(א) אני הגבר ראה עני בשבט עברתו:
(ב) אותי נהג וילך חשך ולא אור: (ג) אף כי ישוב יתפאד ידו כל היום: (ד) בלה בשרי ועורי שבר עצמותי: (ה) בנה עלי ויקף ראש ותלאה:
(ו) במחשפים הושיבני כמתי עולם: (ז) גדר בעדי ולא אצא הכביד נחשתי: (ח) גם כי אזעק ואשוע שמתם תפלתי: (ט) גדר דרכי בגזית נתיבתי ענה:
(י) דב ארב הוא לי ארי במסתרים:
(יא) דרכי סורר ונפשחני שמני שמם:
(יב) דרף קשתו ויצביני כמטרא לחץ:
(יג) הביא ככלייתי בני אשפתי: (יד) הייתי שחק לכל עמי נגינתם כל היום:

(15) He has filled me with bitterness, He has sated me with wormwood.
(16) He has also broken my teeth with gravel stones, He has made me to wallow in ashes.
(17) *My soul has been removed from peace, I have abandoned goodness.*
(18) *And I said: 'My strength has been lost, and my expectation from the Lord.'*

(ט) השְׂפִיעַנִי בְּמִרוֹרִים הַרְוֵנִי לְעֵנָה:
(יז) וַיִּגְרַס בְּחֶצֶץ שְׁנֵי הַכְּפִישְׁנִי בְּאַפְרָ:
(יז) וְתִזְנַח מִשְׁלֹם נַפְשִׁי נִשְׁתִּי טוֹבָה:
(יח) וְאָמַר אֲבָד נַגְחִי וְתוֹחַלְתִּי מֵה':

5) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Taanit 29b

Our Sages taught When the First Temple was destroyed, groups of young priests gathered with the keys of the Sanctuary in their hands, and they ascended to the roof of the Sanctuary and they said before Him:
"Master of the Universe!
Seeing as we are not worthy to be trustworthy curators, let the keys be given to you." And they threw them towards the Heavens.
And the form of a palm appeared, and took them, and they jumped and fell into the fire.
And upon them Isaiah lamented, "The burden concerning the Valley of Vision. What ails you now, that all of you have gone up to the roofs? You are full of uproar, a tumultuous city, a joyous town! Your corpses are not corpses of swords, and not the killed of battle (Isaiah 22:1)."
Even the by Holy One, Blessed be He, it was said, "Kir shouting, crying at the Mount (Isaiah 22:5)."

תלמוד בבלי מסכת תענית כט.
תנו רבנן משחרב הבית בראשונה נתקבצו כיתות כיתות של פרחי כהונה ומפתחות ההיכל בידן ועלו לגג ההיכל ואמרו לפניו רבונו של עולם הואיל ולא זכינו להיות גזברין נאמנים יהיו מפתחות מסורות לך וזרקום כלפי מעלה ויצתה כעין פיסת יד וקיבלתן מהם והם קפצו ונפלו לתוך האור ועליהן קונן ישעיהו הנביא (ישעיהו כב, א) משא גיא חזיון מה לך איפוא כי עליית כולך לגגות תשואות מלאה עיר הומיה קריה עליזה חלליך לא חללי חרב ולא מתי מלחמה אף בהקב"ה נאמר (ישעיהו כב, ה) מקרקר קיר ושוע אל ההר:

Questions for consideration:

- What do you learn here about the mindset of the Priests in the time of the Temple?
- What is the significance of them throwing keys to heaven?
- What do we learn here about God? About the relationship between God and the Jewish people?

6) Isaiah 22:1 - 13

The "Valley of Vision" Pronouncement. What can have happened to you That you have gone, all of you, up on the roofs,
2 O you who were full of tumult, You clamorous town, You city so gay? Your slain are not the slain of the sword Nor the dead of battle.
3 Your officers have all departed, They fled far away; Your survivors were all taken captive, Taken captive without their bows.
4 That is why I say, "Let me be, I will weep bitterly. Press not to comfort me For the ruin of my poor people."
5 For my Lord GOD of Hosts had a day Of tumult and din and confusion— Kir raged in the Valley of Vision, And Shoa on the hill;
6 While Elam bore the quiver In troops of mounted men, And Kir bared the shield—
7 And your choicest lowlands Were filled with chariots and horsemen: They stormed at Judah's gateway
8 And pressed beyond its screen. You gave thought on that day To the arms in the Forest House,
9 And you took note of the many breaches In the City of David. And you collected the water of the Lower Pool;
10 and you counted the houses of Jerusalem and pulled houses down to fortify the wall;
11 and you constructed a basin between the two walls for the water of the old pool.

ישעיהו פרק כב
א מִשָּׂא, גִּיא חֲזִיוֹן: מֵה־לֶּךָ אִפּוֹא, כִּי־עָלִית כָּלֶךָ לַגִּגוֹת. ב תְּשׂאוֹת מְלָאָה, עִיר הוֹמִיָּה--קְרִיָּה, עֲלִיזָה; חֲלַלֶיךָ לֹא חֲלַלֶי-חֶרֶב, וְלֹא מֵתֵי מִלְחָמָה. ג כָּל-קַצְיָנֶיךָ נִדְדוּ-יַחַד, מִקִּשְׁת אֶסְרוּ; כָּל-נִמְצָאֶיךָ אֶסְרוּ יַחַד, מִרְחוֹק בְּרַחוּ.
ד עַל-כֵּן אֲמַרְתִּי שְׁעוּ מִנִּי, אֲמַרְר בְּכִכִּי; אֶל-תְּאַיְצוּ לְנַחֲמֵנִי, עַל-שֹׁד בַּת-עַמִּי.
ה כִּי יוֹם מְהוֹמָה וּמְבוֹסָה וּמְבוֹכָה, לֹאדַנִּי יִהְיֶה צָבָאוֹת--בְּגִי חֲזִיוֹן; מִקְרָקֶר קִיר, וְשׁוֹעַ אֶל-הַהָר. ו וְעִילַם נָשָׂא אִשְׁפָּה, בְּרֶכֶב אָדָם פָּרָשִׁים; וְקִיר עָרָה, מָגֵן. ז וַיְהִי מִבְּחַר-עֲמֻקָּה, מְלֹאוֹ רֶכֶב; וְהַפָּרָשִׁים, שֵׁת שְׁתוֹ הַשְּׂעָרָה. ח וַיִּגְלַל אֶת מַסּוֹ הַיְּהוּדָה; וַתִּבְטַשׂ בְּיוֹם הַהוּא, אֶל-נֶשֶׁק בֵּית הַיְּעָר. ט וְאַתְּ בְּקִיעֵי עִיר-דָּוִד רִאִיתָם, כִּי-רַבּוּ; וַתִּמְקְבְּצוּ, אֶת-מֵי הַבְּרֶכֶה הַתַּחְתּוֹנָה. י וְאַתְּ-בְּתֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם, סִפְרָתָם; וַתַּחְצוּ, הַבָּתִּים, לְבַצֵּר, הַחוּמָה. יא וּמְקוֹה עֲשִׂיתָם, בֵּין הַחֲמַתִּים, לְמֵי הַבְּרֶכֶה הַיְשָׁנָה; וְלֹא הִבְטַתֶּם אֶל-עֲשִׂיָּהּ, וַיִּצְרָה מִרְחוֹק לֹא רִאִיתָם. יב

<p>But you gave no thought to Him who planned it, You took no note of Him who designed it long before. 12 My Lord GOD of Hosts summoned on that day To weeping and lamenting, To tonsuring and girding with sackcloth. 13 Instead, there was rejoicing and merriment, Killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, Eating of meat and drinking of wine: "Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" Then the LORD of Hosts revealed Himself to my ears: "This iniquity shall never be forgiven you Until you die," said my Lord GOD of Hosts.</p>	<p>וַיִּקְרָא, אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת--בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: לְבָכִי, וּלְמִסְפַּד, וּלְקִרְקָה, וּלְחִגְרֵי שֵׁק. יָג וְהִנֵּה שִׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה, הָרֵג בְּקָר וְשָׁחַט צֹאן, אָכַל בֶּשֶׂר, וְשָׁתוּת יַיִן; אָכֹל וְשָׁתוּ, פִּי מִקָּר נְמוֹת. יָד וְנִגְלָה בְּאָזְנִי, יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת: אִם-יִכְפַּר הָעוֹן הַזֶּה לָכֶם, עַד-תָּמוּתוֹן, אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, צְבָאוֹת .</p>
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<p>7) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Taanit 11a <i>Another Baraitha taught: When the community is in trouble let not a person say, 'I will go to my house and I will eat and drink and all will be well with me'.</i> For of one who does so Scripture says, "And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine — 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die!'" (Isaiah 22:13) What follows after this [verse]? "And the Lord of Hosts revealed Himself in my ears: surely this sin shall not be forgiven you until you die" (22:14). To here is the measure of the intermediate ones, but [about] the measure of evildoers, what is written? "Come and I will get wine and we will fill ourselves with ale, and it shall be like this tomorrow" (Isaiah 56:12). What is written after it? "The righteous man perishes, and no man places it to his heart [... that] it is because of the evil that the righteous man is gathered" (Isaiah 57:1) <i>But rather a person should share in the distress of the community,</i> for so we find that Moses, our teacher, shared in the distress of the community, as it is said, "But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it." (Exodus 17:12). Surely Moses had a pillow or a cushion to sit on! Rather, Moses said [to himself], "Since the people of Israel is in distress, I will be with them in their distress." <i>Whoever shares in the distress of the community will merit to behold its consolation'.</i></p>	<p><u>תלמוד בבלי תענית יא.</u> תניא אידיך בזמן שהעבור שרוי בצער אל יאמר אדם אלך לביתי ואוכל ואשתה וישלום עליך נפשי ואם עושה כן עליו הכתוב אומר (ישעיהו כב, יג) והנה ששון ושמחה הרוג בקר ושחוט צאן אכול בשר ושתות יין אכול ושתו כי מחר נמות מה כתיב בתריה ונגלה באזני ה' צבאות אם יכופר העון הזה לכם עד תמותון עד כאן מדת בינונים אבל במדת רשעים מה כתיב (ישעיהו נו, יב) אתיו אקחה יין ונסבאה שכר והיה כזה יום מחר מה כתיב בתריה הצדיק אבד ואין איש שם על לב כי מפני הרעה נאסף הצדיק אלא יצער אדם עם העבור שכן מצינו במשה רבינו שציער עצמו עם הצבור שנאמר (שמות יז, יב) וידי משה כבדים ויקחו אבן וישומו תחתיו וישב עליה וכי לא היה לו למשה כר אחת או כסת אחת לישב עליה? אלא כך אמר משה הואיל וישראל שרויין בצער אף אני אהיה עמהם בצער וכל המצער עצמו עם הצבור זוכה ורואה בנחמת צבור</p>
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Questions for consideration:

- What do we learn here about a person's responsibility to the community? Please notice that our chapter of Isaiah is quoted here. What does this teach you?
- How does this connect to what we saw in source #1?

<p>8) Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, "Religion And Race" (14 January 1963) There is an evil which most of us condone and are even guilty of: <i>indifference to evil</i>. We remain neutral, impartial, and not easily moved by the wrongs done unto other people. Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself; it is more universal, more contagious, more dangerous. A silent justification, it makes possible an evil erupting as an exception becoming the rule and being in turn accepted... <i>The prophet is a person who suffers the harms done to others.</i> Wherever a crime is committed, it is as if the prophet were the victim and the prey. The prophet's angry words cry. The wrath of God is a lamentation. All prophecy is one great exclamation: God is not indifferent to evil! He is always concerned; He is personally affected by what man does to man. He is a God of pathos.</p>
