

Resilience



with

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Defining and Cultivating Resilience

This Resource is for Those Educators Seeking Chizzuk

Resilience: The skills, attributes, and abilities that enable individuals to adapt to hardships, difficulties, and challenges.

Categories of resilience skills:

- Proactive orientation
- Self-regulation
- Achievements
- Connections and attachments
- Community systems

One Year On

Join our 3-Part Webinar to Prepare for the Upcoming Holiday Season and October 7 Anniversary



Texts on Resilience and Guiding Questions to Use with Your Learners:

1

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מנחות צט.

”בַּעַת הַהוּא אָמַר ה' אֵלַי פְּסַל־לְךָ שְׁנֵי־לוחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשִׁימִים... וְאֶכְתֹּב עַל־הַלוחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־הַלוחֹת הַרְאשִׁימִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ וְשָׂמְתָם בְּאָרוֹן:”
(דברים י:א-ב)

תני רב יוסף מלמד שהלוחות ושברי לוחות מונחין בארון מכאן לתלמיד חכם ששכח תלמודו מחמת אונסו שאין נוהגין בו מנהג בזיון.

Babylonian Talmud, Menachot 99a

The verse states: “At that time the Lord said to me: Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first...And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke, and you shall put them in the Ark” (Deuteronomy 10:1–2).

Rav Yosef teaches a baraita: This verse teaches that both the tablets of the Covenant and the pieces of the broken tablets are placed in the Ark. One should learn from here that with regard to a Torah scholar who has forgotten his Torah knowledge due to circumstances beyond his control (e.g., illness), one may not behave toward him in a degrading manner.

What message does the Talmud give by saying that the broken tables were preserved alongside the whole ones in the Ark?

2

Rabbi Shoshana Cohen, D'var Torah Ki Tissa: Brokenness & Forgetting

Real creativity and learning most often happens from a sense of deep need. When something is missing we are most inspired to delve deep and apply our God-given intellect to create new and innovative ideas. Moreover, in places of darkness and confusion, when we recognize that something is missing we are most likely to turn to others to help us make sense of the world and fill the void with wisdom.

The broken tablets in the ark remind us of the power of brokenness, of forgetting, to spark innovation and the building of intellectual and spiritual community. In the words of Leonard Cohen, “there is a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets through.”

What “deep needs” are you seeing that emerged in the aftermath of the brokenness of October 7?

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מכות כד.:-

שוב פעם אחת היו עולין לירושלים, כיון שהגיעו להר הצופים קרעו בגדיהם, כיון שהגיעו להר הבית ראו שועל שיצא מבית קדשי הקדשים, התחילו הן בוכין ורבי עקיבא מצחק.

אמרו לו: מפני מה אתה מצחק?
אמר להם: מפני מה אתם בוכים אמרו לו: מקום שקתוב בו "והזר הקרב יומת", ועכשיו שועלים הלכו בו, ולא נבכה?

אמר להן: לכך אני מצחק, דכתיב: "ואעידה לי עדים נאמנים את אוריה הכהן ואת זכריה בן יברכיהו" - וכי מה ענין אוריה אצל זכריה? אוריה במקדש ראשון, וזכריה במקדש שני! אלא: **תלה הכתוב נבואתו של זכריה בנבואתו של אוריה. באוריה כתיב "לכן בגללכם ציון שדה תחרש", בזכריה כתיב "עוד ישבו זקנים וזקנות ברחבות ירושלים".**

עד שלא נתקיימה נבואתו של אוריה הייתי מתיירא שלא תתקיים נבואתו של זכריה, עכשיו שנתקיימה נבואתו של אוריה - בידוע שנבואתו של זכריה מתקיימת.

בלשון הזה אמרו לו: עקיבא ניחמתנו, עקיבא ניחמתנו.

Babylonian Talmud, Makkot 24a-b

A] On another occasion, they were ascending to Jerusalem. When they arrived at Mount Scopus (and saw the site of the destroyed Temple), they tore their garments. When they arrived at the Temple Mount, they saw a fox that emerged from the site of the Holy of Holies. The Sages began weeping, and Rabbi Akiva was laughing.
B] The Sages said to him: For what reason are you laughing?

C] Rabbi Akiva said to them: For what reason are you weeping?

D] The Sages said to him: This is the place concerning which it is written, "And the non-priest who approaches shall die" (Numbers 1:51), and now foxes walk in it. And shall we not weep?!

E] Rabbi Akiva said to them: That is why I am laughing. As it is written (in Isaiah 8:2), "And I will take to me faithful witnesses to attest - Uriah the Priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."

F] Now what is the connection between Uriah and Zechariah?! Uriah prophesied during the First Temple period and Zechariah prophesied during the Second Temple period. Rather, **the verse (from Isaiah) established that the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah is dependent on the fulfillment of the prophecy of Uriah.**

G] It is written in the prophecy of **Uriah**, "Therefore, for your sake Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become rubble, and the Temple Mount as the high places of a forest" (Micah 3:12).

H] It is written in the prophecy of **Zechariah**, "There shall yet be elderly men and elderly women sitting in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age" (Zechariah 8:4).

I] Until the prophecy of Uriah was fulfilled, I was afraid that the prophecy of Zechariah would not be fulfilled. Now that the prophecy of Uriah WAS fulfilled, it is evident that the prophecy of Zechariah remains valid.

J] The Sages said to him: Akiva, you have comforted us; Akiva, you have comforted us.

Since October 7, have you found yourself being more of a "sage" or more of a "Rabbi Akiva"? How has that affected your work and your constituents?

4

Fred Rogers, newspaper column, 1986

I was spared from any great disasters when I was little, but there was plenty of news of them in newspapers and on the radio, and there were graphic images of them in newsreels.

For me, as for all children, the world could have come to seem a scary place to live. But I felt secure with my parents, and they let me know that we were safely together whenever I showed concern about accounts of alarming events in the world.

There was something else my mother did that I've always remembered: "Always look for the helpers," she'd tell me. "There's always someone who is trying to help." I did, and I came to see that the world is full of doctors and nurses, police and firemen, volunteers, neighbors and friends who are ready to jump in to help when things go wrong.

Who have been the "helpers" you have noticed and admired who have helped YOU cope over this past year?

אבות דרבי נתן ו:ב

מה היה תחלתו של רבי עקיבא? אמרו בן ארבעים שנה היה ולא שנה כלום. פעם אחת היה עומד על פי הבאר אמר מי חקק אבן זו? אמרו לא המים שתדיר [נופלים] עליה בכל יום. אמרו [לו] עקיבא אי אתה קורא "אבנים שחקו מים."
 מיד היה רבי עקיבא דן קל וחומר בעצמו מה רך פסל את הקשה דברי תורה שקשה כברזל על אחת כמה וכמה שיחקקו את לבי שהוא בשר ודם. מיד חזר ללמוד תורה.
 הלך הוא ובנו וישבו אצל מלמדי תינוקות. אי"ל רבי למדני תורה. אחז רבי עקיבא בראש הלוח ובנו בראש הלוח כתב לו אלף בית ולמדה. (אלף תיו ולמדה תורת כהנים ולמדה). היה לומד והולך עד שלמד כל התורה כולה.
 הלך וישב לפני רבי אליעזר ולפני ר' יהושע. אמר להם רבותי פתחו לי טעם משנה כיון שאמר לו הלכה אחת הלך וישב לו בינו לבין עצמו אמר (אלף זו למה נכתבה בית זו למה נכתבה) דבר זה למה נאמר חזר ושאלן והעמידן בדברים.

Midrash Avot D'Rabbi Natan 6:2

What were Akiva's beginnings? It is said: Up to the age of forty, he had not yet studied a thing. One time, he inquired while standing at the mouth of the well, "Who carved out a hole in this stone?" They said to him, "It was the water falling upon it constantly, day after day. Akiva, haven't you read that 'water wears away stone' (Job 14:19)?

Rabbi Akiva immediately applied this, all the more so, to himself. He said: If something soft can carve something hard, then all the more so, the words of Torah, which are like steel, can engrave themselves on my heart, which is but flesh and blood. He immediately went to start studying Torah.

He went with his son and they sat down by the school teachers. He said to one: Rabbi, teach me Torah! He then took hold of one end of the tablet, and his son took hold of the other end. The teacher wrote down aleph and bet for him, and he learned them (aleph to tav, and he learned them; the book of Leviticus, and he learned it). And he went on studying until he learned the whole Torah. Then he went and sat before Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua. "My masters," he said, "reveal the sense of Mishnah to me." When they told him one halakhah, he went off and sat down to work it out for himself. This alef, he wondered, what was it written for? That bet - what was it written for? This teaching - what was it uttered for? He kept coming back, kept asking of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua, until he reduced his teachers to silence.

In what ways might Rabbi Akiva in this story inspire us towards resilience?

Overarching Question:

Which of the 5 categories of resilience might you want to focus on for yourself?

Group Discussion Questions:

1

Where have you seen resilience embodied over this past year?

2

Have you yourself felt resilient this past year? In what ways?

3

Which of these 5 categories of resilience might you want to work on developing further?

Suggested Activities

1

Bring together a small group of clergy or educators, and invite them to work together on the skill of *Self Awareness* (in the Resilience category of Proactive Orientation) by engaging in a **Feelings Walking Tour**. (Thank you to Social-Emotional Learning consultant [Dr. Nancy Parkes](#) for this activity!) After you practice this by considering your emotions in the spaces you normally inhabit, you can then flex this muscle by considering how you feel in the communal spaces you have had to inhabit since October 7.

2

Together with a clergy/educator friend group, practice the skill of *Listening* (in the Resilience category of Connections and Attachments) by playing the **Questions Game** (thank you to the [Constructive Dialogue Institute](#) for this activity!) The focus of this game is constructive dialogue, in which you listen to a person's political opinion without responding and only trying to get them to share more.

3

Teach your learners to utilize the **Thoughts on a Train** tool - a practice that flexes their Resilience skill of *Visualization* (in the category of Self Regulation). (Thank you to clinical psychologist Dr. Regine Galanti for this resource!)

Closing Intention

פרקי אבות ב:טז

הוא היה אומר, לא עליך המלאכה לגמר, ולא אתה בן
חורין לבטל ממנה...

Pirkei Avot 2:16

He [Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not
your duty to finish the work, but neither
are you at liberty to neglect it...

Resilience

