

## ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM

### Unity, Friendship and Unconditional Love

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#### Exodus 19:2

(2) Having journeyed from Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the wilderness. Israel encamped there in front of the mountain,

#### שמות י"ט:ב'

(ב) וַיִּסְעוּ מִרְפִּידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי וַיַּחֲנוּ  
בְּמִדְבַר וַיַּחֲנוּ שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹגֵד הַהָר:

#### Rashi on Exodus 19:2:2

(2) AND THERE ISRAEL ENCAMPED as one man and with one mind — but all their other encampments were made in a murmuring spirit and in a spirit of dissension (Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 19:2:10).

#### רש"י על שמות י"ט:ב:ב'

(ב) וַיַּחֲנוּ שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל. כָּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד,  
אָבֵל שָׂאֵר כָּל הַחֲנִיּוֹת בְּתַרְעוּמוֹת  
וּבְמַחֲלָקָת:

#### Exodus 14:10

(10) As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them. Greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to the LORD.

#### שמות י"ד:י'

(י) וּפָרַעֲהוּ הִקְרִיב וַיִּשְׂאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶת־עֵינֵיהֶם וְהִנֵּה מִצְרַיִם | נֹסַע אַחֲרֵיהֶם  
וַיִּירָאוּ מְאֹד וַיִּצְעֲקוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוָה:

#### Rashi on Exodus 14:10:2

(2) נסע אחריהם [EGYPT] JOURNEYED AFTER THEM (נסע is singular) — the Egyptians journeyed

#### רש"י על שמות י"ד:י:ב'

(ב) נֹסַע אַחֲרֵיהֶם. בְּלֵב אֶחָד כָּאִישׁ אֶחָד.  
דָּבַר אַחֵר – וְהִנֵּה מִצְרַיִם נֹסַע אַחֲרֵיהֶם,  
רָאוּ שֶׁל מִצְרַיִם נֹסַע מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם לַעֲזֹר

after them with one mind and as one man (hence the use of the singular) (Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 14:10:3). Another explanation of והנה מצרים נסע אחריהם is: the singular denotes that they saw, not the Egyptians, but the guardian angel of Egypt coming from heaven to assist the Egyptians. Thus is it explained in the Tanchuma (cf. Exodus Rabbah 21:5).

### Pirkei Avot 1:6

(6) Joshua ben Perahiah and Nittai the Arbelite received [the oral tradition] from them. Joshua ben Perahiah used to say: appoint for thyself a teacher, and acquire for thyself a companion and judge all men with the scale weighted in his favor.

### Rambam on Pirkei Avot 1:6:1

(1) "acquire for yourself a friend". And how good is the statement of Aristotle, "The friend is one." And there are three types of friends: a friend for benefit, a friend for enjoyment and a friend for virtue. Indeed, a friend for benefit is like the friendship of two [business] partners and the friendship of a king and his retinue; whereas the friendship for enjoyment is of two types - the friend for pleasure and the friend for confidence. Indeed, the friend for pleasure is like the friendship of males and females and similar to it; whereas the friend for confidence is when a man has a friend to whom he can confide his soul. He will not

### משנה אבות א'ו'

(ו) יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה וְנִיטַי הָאַרְבֵּלִי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רֵב, וְקַנֵּה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהָיָה דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת:

### רמב"ם משנה אבות א'ו':א'

(א) עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רֵב. וּמָה טוֹב מֵאִמֵּר אַרִיסְטוֹטֵלוֹס הָאֵהוּב אֶחָד הוּא וְהָאֵהוּבִים ג' מִיָּנִים אוֹהֵב תוֹעֵלֶת אוֹהֵב מִנוּחָה וְאוֹהֵב מֵעֵלָה אִמְנָם אוֹהֵב תוֹעֵלֶת כְּאֵהֶבֶת שְׁנֵי הַשׁוֹתֵפִים וְאֵהֶבֶת הַמֶּלֶךְ וּמִחֲנֵהוּ וְאִמְנָם אוֹהֵב מִנוּחָה הוּא ב' מִיָּנִים אוֹהֵב הַנָּאֵה וְאוֹהֵב בְּטַחֲוֹן אִמְנָם אוֹהֵב הַנָּאֵה כְּאֵהֶבֶת הַזְּכָרִים לְנִקְבוֹת וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶם. וְאִמְנָם אוֹהֵב בְּטַחֲוֹן הוּא שִׁיחָה לְאָדָם אוֹהֵב תְּבַטַּח נַפְשׁוֹ בּוֹ לֹא יִשְׁמַר מִמֶּנּוּ לֹא בִּמְעֵשָׂה וְלֹא בְּדַבּוֹר וְיוֹדִיעָהוּ כָּל עֲנִינָיו הַטּוֹב מֵהֶם וְהַמְּגוֹנָה מִבְּלִיתִי שִׁירָא מִמֶּנּוּ שִׁישִׁיגְהוּ בְּכָל זֶה חֲסָרוֹן לֹא אֲצִלוּ וְלֹא

keep [anything] from him - not in action and not in speech. And he will make him know all of his affairs - the good ones and the disgraceful - without fearing from him that any loss will come to him with all of this, not from him and not from another. As when a person has such a level of confidence in a man, he finds great enjoyment in his words and in his great friendship. And a friend for virtue is when the desire of both of them and their intention is for one thing, and that is the good. And each one wants to be helped by his friend in reaching this good for both of them together. And this is the friend which he commanded to acquire; and it is like the love of the master for the student and of the student for the master.

זולתו כי כשיגיע לאדם בטחון באיש זה השעור ימצא מנוחה גדולה בדבריו ובאהבתו הרבה. ואוהב מעלה הוא שיהיה תאות שניהם וכונתם לדבר אחד והוא הטוב וירצה כל אחד להעזר בחבירו בהגיע הטוב ההוא לשניהם יחד וזה האוהב אשר צוה לקנותו והוא כאהבת הרב לתלמיד והתלמיד לרב:

### Leviticus 19:18

(18) You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am the LORD.

### ויקרא י"ט:י"ח

(יח) לֹא־תִקֵּם וְלֹא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כַּמֹּךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

### Pirkei Avot 5:16

(16) All love that depends on something, [when the] thing ceases, [the] love ceases; and [all love] that does not depend on anything, will never cease. What is an example of love that depended on something? Such was the love of Amnon for Tamar. And what is an example of love that did not depend on anything? Such was the love of David and

### משנה אבות ה':ט"ז

(טז) כָּל אֲהָבָה שֶׁהִיא תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, בְּטֵל דָּבָר, בְּטֵלָה אֲהָבָה. וְשֵׂאִינָהּ תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, אִינָהּ בְטֵלָה לְעוֹלָם. אִיזוֹ הִיא אֲהָבָה הַתְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, זוֹ אֲהָבַת אֲמִנוֹן וְתָמָר. וְשֵׂאִינָהּ תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, זוֹ אֲהָבַת דָּוִד וְיְהוֹנָתָן:

Jonathan.

### **Reasonable Love**

*R' Yanki Tauber; based on the teachings of the Rebbe<sup>1</sup>*

The love between David and Jonathan began as an ordinary friendship between two people with no intrinsic connection to each other, a friendship that was based on one's appreciation and enjoyment of the other's positive qualities. Yet their friendship developed into a truly altruistic love.

"Jonathan's soul became bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." To the point that Jonathan risked his life for David even though David's very existence was to his detriment: Jonathan, the eldest son of King Saul, was initially destined to succeed his father as king of Israel.

When Saul learned that David had been anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the next king, he wished to kill him; it was Jonathan who repeatedly saved David from Saul's plans, telling David "You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be second to you".

**Ben-Shahar, Tal. *Happier* (p. 113- 114). McGraw-Hill Education.**

To put it another way, what are we talking about when we talk about unconditional love, a phrase we throw around in the bedroom, the children's

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<sup>1</sup>

[https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article\\_cdo/aid/4018191/jewish/Avot-516-Reasonable-Love.htm](https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/4018191/jewish/Avot-516-Reasonable-Love.htm)

room, the classroom? Do we mean that we want someone to love us for no reason? To love us no matter what? Are we saying that love needs no justification?..

Can there be such a thing as unconditional love? Or is the idea of unconditional love fundamentally unreasonable? It depends on whether or not the characteristics we love in someone are manifestations of that person's core self.

The core self comprises our deepest and most stable characteristics—our character. It comprises the actual principles by which we live, which are not necessarily synonymous with the ones we claim to follow. Because we cannot observe a core self directly, the only way for us to know a person's character is through its manifestations, through the person's behavior, which is observable. A person who is empathetic, assiduous, patient, and enthusiastic—whose core self comprises these characteristics—might establish an intervention program for underprivileged children. The success or failure of the program, which is contingent on any number of external factors, may have nothing to do with who she is; it is the internal characteristics that led her to start the program that are part of her core self. Her behavior (starting the program) reflects her core self, whereas the outcome of her behavior (whether or not the program succeeds) does not. If someone loved her unconditionally, he would, of course, be delighted by the program's success and saddened by its failure; either way, though, his feelings toward her would not change because her core self would not have changed. To be loved for our wealth, power, or fame is to be loved conditionally; to be loved for our steadfastness, intensity, or warmth is to be loved unconditionally<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Ben-Shahar, Tal. *Happier* (pp. 113-114). McGraw-Hill Education.

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The psychologist Donald W. Winnicott observed that children playing in close proximity to their mothers display higher levels of creativity in their games than those who are farther away. Children are highly creative as long as they are within a certain radius of their mothers, inside a circle of creativity, of sorts. The circle of creativity is a space in which children can take risks and try things out, fall and stand up again, fail and succeed — because they feel secure and safe in the presence of a person who loves them unconditionally.

Because adults are capable of higher levels of abstraction than children, we do not always have to be physically near our loved ones to be within their circle of creativity. The knowledge that we are loved unconditionally creates a psychological space of safety and security.

Unconditional love creates a parallel circle of happiness —in which we are encouraged to pursue those things that are meaningful and pleasurable for us. We experience the freedom to follow our passions—whether in art, banking, teaching, or gardening—regardless of prestige or success.

Unconditional love is the foundation of a happy relationship. If someone truly loves me, he or she, more than anything else, would want me to express my core self and would draw out those qualities that make me who I really am.

