

The Thin Line Between Love and Hatred

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... She [Jerusalem] cries in the night, her tears cascade down her cheeks. There is no one to console her, for all her lovers, all her friends have turned against her, have become her enemies...

Eicha 1:2

בכו תבכה בלילה ודמעתה על
לחיה אין לה מנחם מכל אהביה
כל רעיה בגדו בה היו לה לאיבים:
איכה א:ב

As the three weeks of destruction descend upon the world, the Jewish nation mourns the destruction of its holiest place, the Beit Hamikdash. It mourns the fact that all of its friends, all of its beloved nations have turned their back upon it and have become its enemies. How can the nations transform from loving Jerusalem to hating it so suddenly? How are the two feelings connected?

The TaNaCh is filled with stories of love and hatred: between the Avoth, their wives, and their children. Often, love seems to be the driving motive for passing on the hierarchy. For example, Yaakov loved Yosef more than the rest of his sons, therefore, he crafted a special tunic for Yosef.

And Yisrael loved Yosef from all his sons, for he was a son of his old age, and he made for him a coat of many colors.

Breishit 37:3

וישראל אהב את יוסף מכל בניו כי בן
זקנים הוא לו ועשה לו כתנת פסים:
בראשית לז:ג

R. Nechemia said, that all the laws that Shem and Ever passed on to Yaakov were passed to [Yosef].

Breishit Rabba 84:8

ר' נחמיה אמר שכל הלכות שמסרו שם
ועבר ליעקב מסרן לו
בראשית רבה פד:ח

There are two stories in TaNaCh that do not fit into the category of hierarchy, and the continuation of the Jewish people. The first is the encounter of Shchem and Dinah (Breishit 34:1-31) and the second is the less famous encounter of Amnon and Tamar (Samuel II, 13:1-39). Both stories illustrate how Amnon and Shchem defiled Tamar and Dinah respectively. There are many similarities between the two stories: both Dinah and Tamar have defensive brothers, who murder the offender to retain the honor and dignity of their sister. Both have fathers who are angered by the murders.

However, there is a striking difference. Shchem defiled Dinah, after which he loved her and asked to marry her. While the opposite happened with Amnon and Tamar. Amnon loved

Tamar; after defiling her, his love turned into hatred and he sent Tamar away.ⁱ What causes love to disappear or to turn into hatred? Although love and hatred seem to be opposites, in fact, they are two sides of the same coin. Malbim says: "Great is the hatred that emanates from love"ⁱⁱ explaining that love and hatred are interconnected.

The Mishna in Avoth introduces two types of love.

Any love which is dependant on something will become null when that thing becomes null, and love which is not dependant on something will never become null. What is [an example of] love which is dependant on something? The love of Amnon and Tamar. [What is an example of] love which is not dependant on something? The love of David and Yehonatan.

Avot 5:15

כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר בטל
דבר בטלה אהבה ושאינה תלויה
בדבר אינה בטלה לעולם איזו היא
אהבה התלויה בדבר זו אהבת
ושאינה תלויה בדבר אמנון ותמר
זו אהבת דוד ויהונתן:
אבות ה:טו

The Mishna uses the love of Amnon towards Tamar as the quintessential example of a love that is dependent on something physicalⁱⁱⁱ, and therefore, it can never last. As soon as the physical cause disappears, so does the love. However, a love that is independent of anything physical, will last forever, just as the love of David and Yehonatan. However, the love of Amnon and Tamar was based on physical lust. As soon as Amnon satisfied his physical desires, the lust was gone, and he was left with nothing but hatred.

Shlomo describes the love between G-d and His nation in the Song of Songs, Shir Hashirim.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would utterly be contemned.

Shir Hashirim 8:7

מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה
ונהרות לא ישטפוה אם יתן איש את כל הון
ביתו באהבה בוז יבוזו לו:
שיר השירים ח:ז

[This] refers to the love [of God] for Israel, for if all the nations of the world were to gather to take that love from between Him and Israel, they would not be able to, as it says, "Many waters cannot quench love".

Bamidbar Rabba 2:16

מדבר באהבתו של ישראל שאם יתכנסו כל
אומות העולם ליטול את האהבה שבינו
לבין ישראל אינן יכולין שנאמר מים רבים
לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה
במדבר רבה ב:טז

The love is compared to a fire which cannot be extinguished by numerous waters, a love which is eternal, a love which can stand the test of time. Therefore, the love between G-d and Israel is independent of anything physical.

However, the love of Israel towards G-d does have a dimension of love which is *Thuya Bedavar*, dependent on a physical factor. G-d expects the Jewish nation to serve Him, while the Jewish nation expects redemption and the Temple in return.

The Sefer Hamitzvoth explains that the reason for the destruction of the Second Temple was *Sinat Chinam*, baseless hatred.

Why was the second Temple destroyed? We know that [the people of the time] were giants in Torah and acts of kindness. If so, why was it destroyed? Because there was baseless hatred among them... . And is what is clearly visible, the awesome punishment for baseless hatred, because those exiled because of the three cardinal sins [from the first Temple] were redeemed after 70 years. And the end [of the exile] of those that were guilty of baseless hatred has not been revealed.

Sefer Hamitzvoth Katan #8

בית שני למה נחרב. מכירים אנו שגדולים בתורה ובגמילות חסדים היו. אם כן מפני מה נחרב מפני שהיה בהם שנאת חנם. ונרמז בראשי תיבו: "איכה" "ישבה" "בדד" "העיר" "רבת" "עם" "היתה" - איב"ה רע"ה. וזה הוא דבר הנראה לעינים כי גדול עונש שנאת חנם מאד כי אותם שהיה בהם ג' עבירות נגאלו אחר ע' שנה. ואותם שהיה בהם רק שנאת חנם לא נתגלה קצם.

ספר מצוות קטן מצוה ח

On the ninth of Av the Jewish nation mourns over an event of destruction that has occurred long ago. The nation mourns, for the fact that the Beit Hamikdash is not built today is a sign that the cause for its destruction is still present among the Jewish people. There is still baseless hatred, there is still the love that is dependent on the physical. At the end of Megillat Eicha, the Jewish nation requests G-d for permission to return to Him as in previous days, where the independent love was so great and eternal, that nothing in the world could extinguish it. The Jewish nation asks G-d for a love that will never again transform into hatred, for the anger and the punishment the Jewish nation has experienced is too much to bear.

Return us to You, O Lord, and we shall be returned; renew our days as of old. You cannot have utterly rejected us, and be exceeding wrathful against us.

Eicha 5:21-22

השיבנו ה' אליך ונשובה חדש ימינו כקדם: כי אם מאס מאסתנו קצפת עלינו עד מאד: **איכה פרק ה:כא-כב**