

Weekly Teaching

August 17, 2018

The prophet Jeremiah captured the heart of our sacred tradition when he pronounced:

“Thus said God—Do what is just and right; rescue from the defrauder him who is robbed; do not wrong the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; commit no lawless act, and do not shed the blood of the innocent in this place...Your father ate, and drank, and dispensed justice and equity—then all went well with him. He upheld the rights of the poor and needy—then all was well. That is truly heeding Me.”

(Jeremiah 22:3, 13-17)

As Jews, we believe that paramount to our religious way of life is our ethical living. Specifically, we embrace the religious principle of *tikkun olam*—that each of us individually is responsible to “repair our world.”

It’s important to note that it is each individual’s responsibility to bring healing to our world, and that we cannot “outsource” the obligation to others.

We believe that we are religiously obligated to fix everything in the world that is broken. While we are not obligated to fully succeed in this endeavor, we must constantly try to succeed with all of our might.

The ancient Jewish mystics believed that it’s “only as a result of the world’s restoration that both cosmos and the Holy can be said to be complete, and that humanity can once again be whole and united with the Holy.”

Each person needs to participate in the process that brings about repair and healing to the world because it’s the participation in this process that is the means by which we bring wholeness to ourselves and our relationship with God. It’s an individual obligation to heal the world and each of us brings our own unique capabilities.

We often utilize the term “social action” in place of *tikkun olam* and in fact the Temple has its own ever-important social action committee and ongoing initiatives.

We need to pursue activities whereby we can dedicate not only our resources, but also our time (the most precious commodity of all).

We should ask ourselves: “What am I most capable of doing?”

For some, we can visit the elderly, the sick or those in mourning.

For others, we can identify a cause for which we become active, or an organization that can best use our time. Some can offer support at a soup kitchen, love and companionship for someone lonely or time to listen to someone who needs to be heard.

Each day can contain some step in bringing healing to the world, and subsequently a little extra healing within ourselves. Let’s make the time to be present with what God wants, so God can be present with us.

P.S. For more details about our Temple’s ongoing Social Action initiatives, please contact [Scott Kramer](#), Social Action Committee Chair.

Shabbat Shalom,
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