RECOVERING THE SHATTERED SPARKS: CREATING HOLINESS THROUGH WHOLENESS

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Introduction

The intention of this senior thesis is to take a deep dive into understanding one of Judaism's core values. The most hallowed of values and a central focus in biblical and rabbinic texts, as well as daily liturgy, is *shalom*. This word has deep layers of meaning. Jewish children are taught that *shalom* can mean hello, goodbye, and peace. It can mean all three at the same time. It can mean wholeness, health, friendship, and harmony. The peace process, or the pathway to *shleimut*, wholeness, happens in three categories of mitzvot: *bein adam l'Makom*, between a person and God, *bein adam l'chavero*, between a person and their fellow and *bein adam l'atzmo*, between a person and their inner self. Brene Brown, in her book *The Gifts of Imperfection: Your Guide to a Wholehearted Life,* says, "I think it's critically important to define the gauzy words that are tossed around every day but rarely explained…" (Brown, 1). The word *shalom* is "tossed around" often in liturgy and text, and its meaning can be hard to fully grasp, yet the world continues to hope and pray for peace. "When we dig down past the feel good words and excavate the daily activities and experiences that put the *heart* in wholehearted living, we can see how people define the concepts that drive their actions, beliefs, and emotions...we need a common language to help us create awareness and understanding which is essential to wholehearted living" (Brown). The biggest learning from this thesis is that wholeness and peace are not equivalent to perfection. Rather, it is the opposite; embracing imperfection is essential to *shleimut*, for "Wherever perfectionism exists, shame is always lurking...shame is the birthplace of perfectionism" (Brown, 55). This thesis is an attempt to outline more clearly the philosophical value of *shalom* and its counterpoint, *shevira*, brokenness, and in doing so, suggest pathways to

peace, *darchei shalom*. Assessing brokenness and wholeness is not a simple task, as it can occur within an individual, family, or larger system. By helping individuals see themselves in the history and story of the Jewish people and identifying communities engaged in this work, human suffering can be reduced and individuals can overcome shame and loneliness.

Chapter 1: The Roots of Brokenness

Jewish philosophy and theology are a reaction to history and experience. Examples of historical events that defined Jewish philosophy are the expulsion from Spain in 1492, the first ghetto in Venice in 1516, the first emancipation of the Jews in the 18th century, to name a few. The Jewish response to these historical events was through literature and culture, religious and spiritual movements such as Hasidism, Kabbalah, and the Reform Movement. In addition to historical events, Jewish thought and identity have been formed around the study and concepts within Jewish text, teaching, and law. While the Torah is not universally considered to be historically accurate, the stories and values it presents inform Jewish identity.

The first Torah portion, *Bereshit*, describes the nature of humankind and God. The creation of the world is depicted as beginning from a void and chaos, from darkness. Throughout the Torah, from the beginning of God's creation of the world, to the plagues, and wilderness, brokenness has always been present, but so has *shleimut.* Similarly, throughout history, from the destruction of the Temple, the crusades, and the pogroms, to the present moment, brokenness is at the core of human experience. Themes of brokenness and wholeness lie at the core of every Jewish text, story, and concept, as they exist within every aspect of life. There are mystical concepts, political fracturing, communal divisions, and more.

This chapter will outline a few of the central symbols of brokenness that inform Jewish theology and philosophy. In analyzing the core of Kabbalah, the Genesis of creation and expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and the destruction of the Temple, brokenness and wholeness are not understood as in opposition, but, rather, both exist at the same time within

Jewish thought. “From the mystical perspective, reality is always both broken and perfect all at once: Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Kotzk said, ‘There is nothing more whole than a broken heart’ (E. Frankel, 16).

The Kabbalistic Shattering of the Vessels

The notion of *tikkun ha-olam*—healing, mending, repairing the world, improving society—is a powerful concept and is often cited as the work of modern Jews. The notion of necessary reparations, though, implies that there is incompleteness, and that there is work to be done as a result of this brokenness. Kabbalah developed as a response to the expulsion from Spain for, “Feeling pain, loss and guilt, many refugees sought ultimate answers in Kabbalah, with the result that mysticism became a part of everyday life, rather than an esoteric object of study reserved for a privileged few” (Koren, 36). Lurianic Kabbalah swiftly captured the minds and hearts of theologians and rabbis; it became the national theology for Judaism for several generations. In a lecture on the power of Kabbalah, Rabbi David Aaron, author of *Endless Light* and *Love is My Religion*, explains, “Kabbalah teaches that in the beginning all of existence was endless light...When the [Divine] wanted to create [humanity] and this world of multiplicity, the Divine caused a withdrawal of God’s light...creating a vacuum, a cynical vacuum. The Kabbalist teaches this as space…[we] can’t see it, taste it, feel it, yet it’s there. In this space the Divine created vessels, 10 finite vessels...God projected a concentrated thin ray of endless light into the vessels, but the vessels couldn’t take the light, and they exploded. Everything goes into a state of chaos.” There are many questions that emerge from this creation parable. Why did the vessels

break? And why did God give the vessels light that they couldn't handle? In answer to the first question, Aaron answers, "The Kabbalists say that these vessels broke down because each vessel wanted to take the light, hold the light and weren't interested in sharing the light." Therefore, brokenness can be a result of having too much goodness. Even "good," when out of proportion, can cause imbalance.

Kabbalah offers one way of *tikkun*, out of brokenness, "The more you share your presence, your love, your compassion, your empathy, even your finances in *tzedakah*, the more blessing will come to you" (Aaron, 2006). Yet despite this desire for deep connection and a larger purpose, human beings are like shattered glass, scattered dust. While the outside world is broken, and conveys a feeling of insignificance, Kabbalah says each individual has a responsibility to *tikkun*, by listening to the small voice of God within. "Some sparks fell along with the broken shards of vessels and became trapped in the material world where they await redemption. "Until all these fallen sparks of divinity are restored to their source, the world is said to be in a broken state, needing Tikkun, or repair" (Frankel, 30). The act of *tikkun* is linked to the act of healing and of *shaleim*, to make whole.

In answer to the second question, Rabbi Aaron answers that these broken vessels, "serve as a metaphysical memory so that when you come in this world, you have already tasted something beyond this world, and you are trying to find this endless light in your life." Human beings all come into life craving love, God or a higher power, and a larger purpose, craving a deep sense of purpose, a sense of significance. "Just as creation begins its a shattering, the soul begins its journey of awakening at birth with a shattering of primal unities...Nothing is created without also shattering some pre-existing order, just as the undivided oneness of God that existed

prior to creation had to be sacrificed in order for the world of multiplicity to come into being" (Frankel, 29). Rabbi David Aaron quotes Nachman as saying, "If you can understand [this] metaphor you have the secret to everything in your life."

The Destruction of the Temple and the Exile of a People

Kabbalah offers one explanation for the root of brokenness. The Book of Lamentations, which details the destruction of the Temple, offers another understanding: "The suffering is, as it were, an affirmation that God is still there and still concerned with the fate of Israel. [God] may hide [God's] face, but [God] has not ceased to be Israel's God. Lamentations contains the seeds of comfort and religious rebuilding" (Berlin, 18). I understand this to mean,that the presence of intense emotion is a greater connection to God than an absence of emotion. Both the Kabbalistic understanding of brokenness and the destruction of the Temple, focus on the removal of God's presence.

The destruction of the Temple is an example of a moral injury that affected the entire Jewish people, and continues to be a central part of Jewish identity. Moral injury is a trauma of moral conscience. "Moral emotions, such as guilt, shame, remorse, and outrage at others, result in broken trust, poor health, social isolation, and, in extreme cases, suicide or violence" (Brock, 2017). It is a shattering of understanding. For the Jews during the time of the Temple, their understanding was, make sacrifices and God will grant Israel goodness. The destruction of the Temple, and therefore, exile from God, forced an entire people to reconstruct their theology and

understanding of morality. The destruction is not a reversible injury. It can only be rebuilt after first learning and growing from the past; the Jewish people must live in a new reality.

Israel, once upheld as God's nation, given special honor, is disgraced. The loss of the Temple causes the loss of Israel's social status and significance. The core issue is not only material loss but social loss. Not only are they facing poverty, hunger, and exile, but shame and isolation from other nations, and from God. "I became the laughingstock of all my people; they mock me in song all day long" (Lamentations 3:14). There are many layers of grief and shame occuring. In order to heal from moral injury and engage in soul repair, the process of how the moral injury is remembered is crucial to healing. The Book of Lamentations is Israel's reaction to this deep shame. While it seems Israel is the victim, it is possible that using the destruction of the Temple as the case study, the perpetrator of moral injury could be God, and the victim, Israel. God is breaking the covenant made with Israel and Israel is left with the shattered pieces trying to understand the cause of God's abandonment. However, "In moral injury, both the perpetrator and the victim can be suffering. In retrospect the perpetrator can be violating their own moral code, and the victim has been the object of the flagrant disregard for those moral codes or values that they assumed were shared. Both parties need to name what is taking place and how they can find healing in their own ways. Sometimes in the form of restorative justice and sometimes in other ways" (Geringer & Weiner, 2020). God could be the victim of moral injury. God made a covenant with Israel, and yet, Israel sinned, and humiliated God amongst the other nations. The destruction of the Temple is not just about the loss of physical property, but a loss of honor, and shame for God and Israel.

When looking at the Kabbalah's understanding of brokenness and the theology behind the destruction of the Temple, God along with the Jewish people are victims. In the *shevira*, the primordial Divine light was so powerful that it shattered some of the vessels. "Considering that the universe is located at the heart-center of God's infinite being, you might say that God's very heart was broken as the world came into existence" (E. Frankel, 30). Brokenness therefore occurs not only for human beings, but for God. In the physical destruction of the Temple, a people was scattered, and God displaced. Both examples, the destruction of the Temple, a historical event, and Kabbalistic shattering of the vessels, a theological and mystical understanding as an outgrowth of a historical event (the expulsion from Spain), offer different solutions to moving from brokenness to wholeness. Lurianic Kabbalah urges that all Jews perform *tikkun* through prayer, *mitzvot*, Torah study, observance of festivals, with the intention of capturing the Divine sparks in the universe. Through these methods Israel has the power to bring about the restored world, *l'olam ha-tikkun*, to help unite the *sefirot* and restore the world to its pristine state. The process of soul repair after the destruction of the Temple demands a lament of reciprocity to restore honor, and obliterate shame, for both God and Israel.

It becomes clear when analyzing the shattering of the vessels and the destruction of the Temple, that a loss of purpose and shame are at the heart of brokenness, but that there are pathways to peace.

Loss of Purpose and Loss of Self: Meaning of Suffering

'How do I find meaning in a meaningless world?' This describes what it means to be morally injured (Brite Divinity School, 2018). The shattering of commonly held worldviews, makes the search for meaning elusive. The most notable book on the topic of purpose is Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*. Each Jewish theologian and philosopher is a product of their time and circumstances. Frankl, a Holocaust survivor, tried to make sense and find meaning in the suffering, pain and loss he experienced. He developed the concept of logotherapy based on the idea that the primary motivational force of an individual is to find a meaning in life. He argued that more than anything, humans need meaning in their lives, for, "Humans are a meaning making species" (Brown, 1). He said that the root of suffering is a result of loss of meaning. For, "The prisoner who had lost faith in the future—his future—was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay." (Frankl, 74). Chassidic rabbi, former clinical psychiatric director of St. Francis Hospital, Pittsburgh and founder of Gateway Rehabilitation Center in Pittsburgh, Rabbi Abraham Twerski, understands having self-purpose as the solution to addiction. "The refusal to engage with life is an affliction of the soul that leads to paralysis of effort. It is the despair borne of the belief that nothing matters. It is a denial of the gift of life." (Rossetto, 67). On the significance of the individual's life and actions, "The Zohar views every human act as of cosmic importance so that when humans perform *mitzvot,* engage in prayer and Torah stud, and observe the festivals of the calendar year, they help unit the *sefirot*, the ten emanations of the Divine, and restore the world to its pristine state, ending all divisuals so that all existence is united with God" (Rosenthal, 223).

Mysticism emphasizes the value that human beings are created *b'tzelem elohim* (in the image of God)- that each individual matters to God and that there will never be another person who can fulfill their purpose here on this earth. The problem emerges when an individual loses sight of this purpose as a result of suffering and brokenness. Most individuals question their purpose for existence at one point in their lives. There is a pervasive, "anxiety of meaninglessness" which is an "anxiety about the loss of an ultimate concern, a meaning that gives meaning to all meanings" (Brite Divinity School, 2018). When tragic disaster befalls humanity and lives are threatened or lost, two things occur at once: there is an instantaneous shattering of the world and there is an instantaneous survival reflex that responds to the shattering. The world that is coming apart is also a world that responds to hold itself together. "Put one way, those shattered by violence and other catastrophes must adapt or die. Put another way, we humans must find life-giving means of coping with existential threat and traumatic loss if we are to survive and thrive as individuals and communities" (Graham).

Kabbalah answers that there is a reason, a *kavanah*, behind God's creation of the world. If God didn't create the world then of course there is no purpose, but creation happened because of God. If the world as a whole does not have a purpose, how can an individual have purpose? The question is posed: what is a person's obligation in the world? What is the purpose of existence? While spirituality is a searching for the sacred, religion is the larger social and institutional context in which the search for the sacred takes place. In Rabbi Twerski's work with individuals experiencing addiction, he notes that the secular world emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of life is self-pleasure and the indulgence of one's individual desires. He says a spiritual life has a larger purpose connected to community and God. Frankl says though, "It goes without

saying that not each and every case of depression is to be traced back to a feeling of meaninglessness...But even if each and every case of suicide had not been undertaken out of a feeling of meaninglessness, it may well be that an idinvidual's impulse to take his life would have been *overcome* had he been aware of some meaing and purpose worth livng for" (Frankl, 141).

The meaning-making process involves piecing together lived experiences with conceptions of God in order to form a diagnosis and a treatment plan. On the surface, this question of, "What is ultimately important in life?" can seem basic. However, for those who are experiencing feelings of brokenness, everything can feel meaningless and shattered within oneself, one's relationships with loved ones, and all life on earth. This processing of what is of ultimate importance is doing the work of universal repair, joining the shattered pieces of the psyche together, to "make the unconscious conscious—or whether we work on transcending our sense of separateness from one another we are participating in this work of tikkun. When each detail or fragment of creation is allowed to reveal its unique attributes within the framework of a unified whole, the very purpose of creation is fulfilled." (31, Estelle).

The Awareness of Shame

Shame is at the heart of brokenness, and a conspiracy of silence and lack of transparency are the root. Shame has been part of human consciousness since the Garden of Eden. Shame is associated with death as, "Death is first mentioned in the story of Adam and Eve, when God threatens the man if he eats from the tree of knowledge...eating and absorbing the fruit of

knowledge had distinguished him as an individual. In that moment, he made the fateful choice not to lose himself in mystical union with God. He chose instead to remain fully human" (Frishman, 2014, 193). As soon as humans have knowledge, they are met with shame. Prior to this knowledge, despite their nakedness, man and woman did not feel shame (Gen 2:25). This lack of shame is in stark contrast to the next scene where they hide from God the awareness of their vulnerability and transgression. The next and final time the root for shame, בוש, appears in the Five Books of Moses is in Exodus 32 in the movements leading up to Israel building the Golden Calf. Similar to the destruction of the Temple, Israel's sin and disobedience results in God's shame, but while the Hebrew word for shame specifically appears only two times in the Torah, shame is interwoven and underlying most of the Bible. The shame of Adam and Eve is passed to their son Cain: " but [God] did not turn to Cain, and He rejected his offering. And Cain was very angry in his jealousy of Abel, and his face was downcast by the shame of his rejection" (Genesis 4:5). Just as shame exists between brothers a few generations later, "When Rachel saw that she had not borne children for Jacob, she envied her sister; and Rachel said to Jacob: 'Pray for children on my behalf, or else I will die of grief and shame' (Genesis 30:1). Shame around barrenness in particular is a recurring theme in the Bible. Shame is the value passed from generation to generation.

Additionally, "The rabbis from the Talmud to modern times, further examine shame and find its presence in many aspects of life...The fact that rabbis understand shame to be integrated into most every aspect of human existence, and that they consider shame so critical to Jewish spirituality as to ensconce it in daily liturgy—bespeaks of a humble acknowledgment" (Crane, 2011). Shame is a pervasive and universal human experience. It can be an individual or

communal experience. It can be within the soul of one character, as in the case of Adam and Eve, or a family, or for an entire nation, Israel.

Just as wholeness occurs on many levels, so too does shame; it can be a self- shame, between one person and another, and between the self and God. “The story of Adam and Eve expelled from the Garden of Eden is our first mythic struggle with the incomparable feelings of alienation, loneliness, and powerlessness that an exile faces as a stranger in a strange land. Kabbalah is no different in kind, but much richer in depth. The kabbalistic myth describes the inner workings of the *sefirot* that correspond to Jewish exile” (Hoffman, 16). Shame causes a loss of meaning, self worth, and purpose. The rabbis noted the debilitating nature of shame... No one is immune to the challenge of human brokenness. Shame is a barrier to wholeness because it usually means a fear of admitting failures and changing behaviors, and it stems from a place of unworthiness. If communities are working toward relationships based in love, belonging, and story, they have to start in the same place: acknowledging that each individual is worthy. However, the prevalence of shame, its existence in the very core understanding of humanity makes it extremely challenging to strip away.

Distinguishing Between Wholeness and Perfection

Lying on the other side of shame is perfectionism. Imperfection is within the very fabric of the first Torah portion detailing Creation. “The Ba’al Shem Tov said that humankind is unlike the rest of creation in that it is not made in its final state; an animal like an alligator was made perfect, born an animal and remains an animal, it doesn't evolve. Man though is different. God

could have made a perfect spiritual being, but then we would be angels. God didn't want another angel. God wanted a creature that would make itself spiritual" (Twerski, 2015). The most tragic human mistake is trying to be perfect. Feeling shamed, judged and blamed (and the fear of these feelings) are realities of the human experience. Imperfection is present from the beginning, so to expect anything else would be defying God's desires. "Perfectionism actually increases the odds that we'll experience painful emotions and often leads to self blame: It's my fault I'm feeling this way because 'I'm not good enough' " (Brown, 57). The desire for perfection has disastrous effects, because it is not an achievable outcome.

Rebbe Nachman describes the imperfection of the world through the metaphor of a menorah made of defects. In this parable, Rebbe Nachman suggests that the shattering of the vessels of creation was not so much an "accident" but part of God's creative process. His tale also suggests that God created a flawed universe in order to give every creature a role in its restoration. "This world, like the menorah made of defects, was created with basic faultiness, so that perfection might be reached through imperfection, or as the Zohar suggests, that light might be revealed through darkness. Each of us was created with some deficit or character flaw we need to fix in ourselves—our own inner chamber of darkness. Through the work of *tikkun ha-nefesh* (soul-healing/character refinement) we illuminate the 'dark' and uninhabitable places within our souls so that our defects ultimately become the cracks or openings through which our inner light can shine forth into this world. And by seeking out the holy sparks, or goodness, that exists in all things—in all times, in all places and in every person—we participate in the collection work of tikkun, or restoration, enabling the broken, imperfect vessels of creation to reveal the light of the infinite." (Frankel, 37)

This work of looking within oneself to see imperfections is difficult and taxing. However, Brene Brown says, “When we become more loving and compassionate with ourselves and we begin to practice shame resilience, we can embrace our imperfections. It is in the process of embracing our imperfections that we find our truest gifts: courage, compassion and connection” (57-8). It is often more challenging to accept one’s own imperfections, than to accept the imperfection of others. If Judaism teaches that human beings are created *b’tzelem elohim*, then just as humans are flawed, so too is God flawed.

The work of soul repair is coming to terms, and finding meaning and liberation in one’s imperfections. “Spirituality of imperfection—is thousands of years old. And yet it is timeless, eternal, and ongoing, for it is concerned with what in the human being is irrevocable and immutable: the essential imperfection, the basic and inherent flaws of being human. Errors, of course, are part of the game. They are part of our truth as human beings. To deny our errors is to deny yourself, for to be human is to be imperfect, somehow error-prone.To be human is to ask unanswerable questions, but to persist in asking them, to be broken and ache for wholeness, to hurt and to try to find a way to healing through the hurt. To be human is to embody a paradox, for according to that ancient vision, we are ‘less than the gods, more than the beasts, yet somehow also both’. We are not ‘everything’ but neither are we ‘nothing’ (Kurtz).

High Holiday liturgy focuses on the inevitably of human imperfection. Each year there is an entire month dedicated to the acknowledgement of *anachnu chatanu*, “We have sinned.” The *Un’taneh Tokef* prayer, in particular, brings the pray-er face-to-face with their time-limited journey on this earth, reminding us of the questions we will have to answer when we die, having tried to be the best person we can be. PerfecTION is not the goal. PerfecTing is—“perfecting the

self" and "perfecting the world" around us...*Un'taneh Tokef* answers that question (how do you go about perfecting?) with its three powerful directives of "repentance, prayer, and charity"—a yearly rehearsal for the heavenly tribunal we will face some day. Our ongoing work of perfecting prepares us to take that stairway to heaven" (Wolfson, 2014). The journey from brokenness to wholeness is not about perfection, but about, even in the face of shame and suffering continuing to bravely and courageously expose oneself to the process of reparation and healing.

Chapter 2: The Three Levels of *Shleimut*

Brokenness and shattering both disrupt the cyclical nature of life and are a reminder that recovery is not necessarily a linear process. While there is a strong desire to be linear, this is not how grief works. Similarly, wholeness is cyclical, and there can be times of feeling more whole than other times. Embracing the cyclical nature of brokenness and wholeness is where healing begins. "This is precisely how the Hasidic masters viewed the shattering of the vessels. They understood the myth as an archetypal story about all life. All living creatures pass through these three gates. At every transition point in the life cycle, when one stage of life ends and another begins, we inevitably pass through this death-rebirth cycle of creation, dissolution, and recreation" (E. Frankel, 30). The examples of brokenness in Jewish texts are contrasted with that of *shalom*: a value that is at the center of the world's priorities, especially at the center of the Jewish values, but has layers of meaning. By identifying its core principles and parsing out the dimensions of wholeness, a pathway from brokenness can be clarified.

"The significance of *shleimut*, wholeness, ranges over several spheres and can refer in different contexts to bounteous physical conditions, to a moral value, and, ultimately to a cosmic principle and Divine attribute" (Roth). *Mitzvot* are based around obligation and covenant to God, Jewish community, and the self. Kabbalists understand that *mitzvot* are essential to *tikkun*, to repair the brokenness. Therefore, just as *mitzvot* carry a threefold obligation, so too does *shleimut* happen on three levels. As Divine commandments, they are *bein adam l'Makom*, obligations between a person and God, *bein adam l'chavero*, between a person and their fellow, and *bein adam l'atzmo*, between a person and their inner self. The individual can cultivate these

relationships by recognizing God's eternal love even in times of pain and isolation, telling their story, connecting them to Torah, and recognizing the paradoxical nature of life. Wholeness will be realized when the individual reconciles the incongruous nature of being a human being.

Bein adam l'Makom: Between a person and God

The category of *mitzvot bein adam l'Makom*, between a person and God, is about an individual first struggling with, then cultivating and developing, their relationship with the Divine, so that ultimately they feel at peace with God. Cultivating spirituality and a relationship with God means asking critical questions of one's theology including, "How does one understand God or see God in relationship to self?" The intention to ask these difficult questions about one's relationship to God in and of itself is essential on the pathway of healing the whole individual.

"It is this spiritual freedom—which cannot be taken away—that makes life meaningful and purposeful" (Frankl, 67). Spirituality and belief in a higher power is at the end of a search for meaning and is seen as the remedy to this loss of purpose. "The Kabbalah teaches that only the presence of God can fill this in our lives" (Aaron, 2006). The association of God with a loving presence is associated not just with Judaism but spirituality as a whole. Throughout his life, Martin Luther King Jr. was a prophet of love. He wrote a collection of sermons entitled *Strength to Love*. "The major focus of these talks was the celebration of love as a spiritual force that unites and binds all life" (Hooks, 75). In 1967 in a lecture opposing war, King declared, "When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life." Living

life in touch with the Divine spirit seems to give life a deeper meaning while helping one see the light of love in all living beings, including oneself.

While establishing a relationship with God can give life meaning, it is also true that any existing relationship to God or a higher power can be shattered after experiencing trauma and illness leading to doubts about God's existence.. This is a disorientating and lonely experience. "Concepts of God are often lived out unconsciously and come into focus in times of crises" (Payne, 1999). Theology and spirituality are defined, in part, by how one understands suffering and by the attempts to find wholeness and meaning from the suffering. The ancient texts understand the feeling of isolation during suffering and remind the sufferer that, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted' (Psalms 34:19). It is hard to feel God's love in times of pain and isolation. According to Kabbalah "When God withdrew the light of the infinite, this withdrawal was also an act of love, for it created the space for the world's existence" (E. Frankel, 28). It seems incongruent and problematic that God shows love by disappearing. This leaves human beings to continually search for God and process this abandonment, especially in times of brokenness and pain. "So many people turn to spiritual thinking only when they experience difficulties, hoping that the sorrow or pain will miraculously disappear. Usually, they find that the place of suffering—the place where we are broken in spirit, when accepted and embraced is also a place of peace and possibility" (Hooks, 80). It is the prior knowing of love, or hope of knowing love, "that keeps us from falling into that sea of despair" (ibid).

In the kabbalistic texts, peace signifies a Divine quality or emanation. Therefore God is equated to peace, and striving for wholeness brings God into the brokenness. "Spirituality says

YOU MATTER you have an unusual perspective on life. All of us have a supreme nature"[1] If human beings have a supreme nature, then everyone can experience wholeness just as much as God. "Most of us who are searching for spiritual connection spend too much time looking up at the sky and wondering why God lives so far away. God lives within us, not above us. Sharing our gifts and talents with the world is the most powerful source of connection with God" (Brown, 112). Therefore, the relationship *bein adam l'Makom* is strengthened when each individual finds their purpose in life. Yet, "If we want to live and love with our whole hearts, and if we want to engage with the world from a place of worthiness, we have to talk about the things that get in the way—especially shame, fear, and vulnerability...The 4 elements of shame resilience: Name it, talk about it, own your story, tell your story" (Brown, 36-44). Love emerges as the antithesis of shame, and a form of resilience in the face of brokenness.

In Brene Brown's study of human behavior, resilience is outlined as a key element of living "wholeheartedly." In her chapter entitled, "Cultivating a Resilient Spirit: Letting go of numbing and powerlessness" Brown says that spirituality is a necessary component for resilience and that "The only experience that seems to combat [hopelessness, fear, blame, pain, discomfort, vulnerability and disconnection] is the belief that we're all in this together and that something greater than us has the capacity to bring love and compassion into our lives" (Brown, 75). Dr. Lawrence Hoffman says though, "God and the universe are the same, what happens to us must simultaneously happen to God. Affairs on earth are mirrored by parallel activity within the Divine *sefirot*. Take just the concept of exile, which has so characterized the Jewish stories for centuries. If exile is utter loneliness, then God too must experience loneliness and yearning

[1] Conversation from Beit T'shuvah's Elaine Breslow Intensive experience (2020)

for wholeness in its place. Every human act on earth affects the harmony of the Divine *sefirotic* realm: our sins that drive the *sefirot* farther apart, and our acts of good, the *mitzvot*, which bring them back together" (Hoffman, 16-17).

Mitzvot are commandments. For many Orthodox Jews who feel bound by the commandments, *mitzvot* are not voluntary. However, for Jews to whom this does not apply, ritual actions can build the relationship between humankind and God. For all Jews, regardless of observance or relation to the commandments, though, *kavana* is a mindset necessary for the performance of many mitzvot (Halachipedia). It is when despite Israel's actions, and in Israel's pain and isolation, that God reaches out, that the relationship is further strengthened. "God's love of Israel is eternal. Is it conceivable that sin, the work of man, should destroy what is intimately Divine and eternal?" (Heschel, 196). Earlier prophets, immersed in guilt and punishment, addressed Israel as a sinful nation. Second Isaiah, radiant with triumph and joy, addresses Israel as 'You who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord' (51:1)... [previous prophets] called upon Israel to mourn; [Second Isaiah] calls upon her to sing and to rejoice. Israel's transgressions are trivial and insignificant when compared with God's love. Iniquities pass, even their memory may vanish in forgiveness, but God's love for Israel will never pass, will never vanish" (ibid).

The concept of love is inextricably tied to wholeness and peace. The image of the destruction of the Temple as a consequence and punishment for Israel's sins is, on one hand, helpful to understand feelings of brokenness, but, on the other hand, is problematic in that it propagates the dangerous misconception that the relationship between a person and God can be manipulated through the *mitzvot* or any action. When the people of Israel were destitute, they did not feel God's loving presence, instead they felt abandoned. A righteous individual might think

that by performing the "right" commandments, no disaster would befall them. Moral injury is the result of "psychological injury directly resulting from a 'betrayal of what's right'" (Nieuwsma et al., 2015). The Book of Job is the ultimate testimony that an individual's righteousness will not necessarily protect them from pain and brokenness. However, with *kavanah* to seek God's love and cultivate spirituality *t'filah, tzedakah, and t'shuvah* can heal an individual's relationship with God. Brown understands spirituality as the, "recognition and celebration that we are all inextricably connected to each other by a power greater than all of us, and that our connection to that power and to one another is grounded in love and compassion. Practicing spirituality brings a sense of perspective, meaning, and purpose to our lives" (Brown, 64). For Brown, therefore, spirituality is intrinsically linked to responsibility and love; the responsibility and love an individual has for God, for others, and for themself.

Bein adam l'chavero: Between a person and their fellow

The shattering of the vessels and the destruction of the Temple focuses mostly on the broken relationship between an individual and God. However, the shattering of personal relationships, between one person and another, is equally painful and frustrating. The category of peace *bein adam l'chavero* recognizes the role of interpersonal relationships in the overall wholeness process. The beloved text *Eilu D'varim*, based on *Peah* 1:1 states most clearly the role of mitzvot and their role in finding meaning and bringing peace in the world.

EILU d'varim she-ein lahem shiur,	אֵלּוּ דְבָרִים שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם שִׁעוּר,
she-adam ocheil peiroteihem	שֶׁאָדָם אוֹכֵל פֵּרוֹתֵיהֶם
baolam hazeh	בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה
v'hakeren kayemet lo laolam haba.	וְהַקֶּרֶן קַיֶּמֶת לוֹ לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.
V'eilu hein:	וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:
kibud av va-eim,	כִּבּוּד אָב וָאֵם,
ug'milut chasadim,	וּגְמִילוּת חֲסָדִים,
v'hashkamat beit hamidrash	וְהַשְׁכָּמַת בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ
shacharit v'ar'vit,	שַׁחֲרִית וְעַרְבִית,
v'hachnasat orchim,	וְהַכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים,
uvikur cholim,	וּבִקּוּר חוֹלִים,
v'hachnasat kalah, ul'vayat hameit,	וְהַכְנָסַת כַּלָּה, וּלְוָיַת הַמֵּת,
v'iyun t'filah,	וְעִיּוּן תְּפִלָּה,
vahavaat shalom	וַהֲבָאַת שָׁלוֹם
bein adam lachaveiro,	בֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵרוֹ,
v'talmud Torah k'neged kulam.	וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כֻּלָּם.

THESE ARE THINGS that are limitless,
of which a person enjoys the fruit of this world,
while the principal remains in the world to come.
They are: honoring one's father and mother,
engaging in deeds of compassion,
arriving early for study, morning and evening,
dealing graciously with guests, visiting the sick,
providing for the wedding couple,
accompanying the dead for burial,
being devoted in prayer,
and making peace among people.
But the study of Torah encompasses them all.

This text asserts that the act of *mitzvot* related to making peace *bein adam l'Makom* is a duty which cannot be measured, and that Torah study is essential to them all. Torah study is the gateway to wholeness *bein adam l'chavero*. *Mekh Bahodesh 12* says, "The majority of passages on the subject of peace are concerned with family or communal life, that is, with internal peace among the people, and only a minority are concerned with external relations between Israel and other peoples, between nations and states…'He who establishes peace between man and his fellow, between husband and wife, between two cities, two nations, two families or two governments ... no harm should come to him'" (Ravitzky, 686). *Shalom* is the most important value in Jewish texts and specifically making peace *bein adam l'chavero*. While the Torah

contains both voices of violence and non-violence, love and hatred, overall the voice that prevails is that of peace and reconciliation.

Everything in this world including oneself, one's intimate relationships with friends and family, all life on earth, is essentially a shattered vessel, splintered into many pieces. "The society we yearn to shape isn't just utilitarian or self-serving. We imagine utopia, a messianic *shalom*, the peace of absolute wholeness, where all aspects of life become interconnected in complete harmony...we go through life seeking our proper place in the whole, locating others, for example, whose place seems bound up with their own. Life's meaning emerges only when we surpass mere self-sufficiency and link ourselves properly with others. Each of us thereby influences the whole. When we live in a manner that reflects this perception of our place in life, we realize holiness. When we act according to our own little piece and nothing more, we are ordinary" (Hoffman, 192). Connecting with others and either finding joy in relationships or the process of coming to peace with fractured relationships is important for wholehearted living.

Torah study is essential in understanding the complex relationships that are inherent within families and communities. God realizes God is not enough for *adam* and God declares it is *lo tov*, not good, for *adam* to be alone. God tries to find a solution to loneliness through human relationships. Clearly, however, loneliness still pervades life; there is often an absence of true and meaningful connection *bein adam l'chavero*. So while creating peace *bein adam* l'*Makom* is essential, "The immeasurable value of each person is firmly placed in a larger setting of family, community, peoplehood, and worldwide human kinship. That first person soon becomes a couple. A family makes its appearance and, by the beginning of Exodus, that family

has morphed into a people. No one is complete in him or herself. Rather, everyone's destiny plays out in the context of a much larger whole" (Lewis, 5).

There is a body of literature and method of recovery using Torah study as a spiritual practice. "Our sages teach...Where is the light today? The Holy One concealed it in the Holy Book— and those who study Torah will bring forth its radiant sparks" (Goldberg, Marder, Marder, & Shapiro, 2015). Jews seldom study Torah alone; the study of Torah is a social and communal activity, and as *Eilu D'varim* says, the gateway to *v'havat shalom bein adam l'chavero*, making peace between a person and their fellow. The *chevrutah* approach of studying Torah in pairs is a way to create meaningful connections and is also an opportunity to connect the stories of one's ancestors with their personal stories. Storytelling has always been important for the Jewsih people. The Torah is the sacred written document which helps us understand who the Jewish people are, who God is, and how to understand life. Storytelling is a key part of the integration process and part of overcoming shame. At the core of the story, the story-teller will describe their spiritual journey. Everyone's story is different, as each individual is special and unique. All of the biblical characters have faults, none is perfect, and far from it. Noah is selected by God for his righteousness to start the new human race. Perhaps he is overwhelmed by the prospect of rebuilding a destroyed world, and the expectations of God, and he plants a vineyard and gets drunk. His sons then quarreled among themselves, their descendants came into conflict, and by the tenth generation after the flood, the state of the world was just as violent; peace was still lacking. Rabbi Paul Steinberg writes, "These demons known as shame and blame have been passed down to us from generation to generation. It's time to rewrite the story. We are all blemished. Instead of covering up our imperfections, misdeeds, and vulnerabilities we have to

own and befriend them" (P. Steinberg, 3). For those who feel broken, who feel shame, the power of having their story affirmed by another human being without judgment, and seeing their story as part of the long chain of tradition described in Torah is one that aids in the wholeness process. "To experience our lives as living embodiments of Torah is to know that our lives have meaning and purpose...It is composed of the stories of each of our lives, as we live mindfully and wholeheartedly from the depth of our being. Seeing our lives as living embodiments of Torah is an invitation to live life with a greater awareness of the holiness of each moment...Ultimately, every person is an awesome mystery, a complete Sefer Torah in and of herself" (E. Frankel, 285, 294).

Bein adam l'atzmo: between a person and their inner self

The third level of wholeness is *bein adam l'atzmo* between a person and their inner self, dealing with all things personal growth, transforming the self through self-improvement and self-love and acceptance. The other two categories, *bein adam l'Makom* and *bein adam l'chavero* certainly impact on the whole individual. This category is perhaps the most critical, as the process of peacemaking within oneself radiates out to impact the individual's relationship with God and with their fellows. Rabbi Doctor Jonathan Crane is currently a peace studies, religion, and ethics professor at Emory University and the Scholar of Bioethics and Jewish Thought at the Ethics Center. In conversation with him, he offered this preliminary definition of peace- "a sense of calm, a sense of *shleimut*, a wholeness, which means reconciling with one's waywardness, transgressions, addictions— a fairly psychological definition of peace." Just as feelings of shattering within oneself can radiate out to affect the other relationships in an

individual's life, so too is it necessary to heal brokenness, shame, and destruction which infiltrate one's relationships to others and to God. This concept is best expressed by Black Elk, Oglala Sioux and spiritual leader in these words:

"The first peace, which is the most important,
Is that which comes within the souls of people
When they realize their relationships,
Their oneness, with the universe and all its powers,
And when they realize that at the center
And when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells Wakan-Taka (The Great Spirit),
And that this center is really everywhere it is within each of us.
This is the real peace, and the others are but reflections of this.
The second peace is that which is made between two individuals,
And the third is that which is made between two nations.
But above all you should understand that there can never be peace between nations until there is known that true peace, which as I have often said, is within the souls of men." (Elk & Neihardt, 2014)

The "first peace" described by Black Elk is that of *bein adam l'atzmo*. The first parashah, *Bereshit*, also has something to say about this level of peace. Nineteenth-century kabbalist Rabbi Chaim of Velozin wrote on how Adam and Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit symbolizes the inevitable mixing of good and evil that was the outcome of creation. He wrote further, "The forces of evil were mixed inside [Adam] and so too, in all the worlds. And this is the meaning of the tree of knowledge [da'at] of good and evil—that they were joined and mixed together inside him [Adam] and in all the worlds—the good and evil together—one, actually, inside the other—because the meaning of "da'at" is union, as it is known in the esoteric knowledge" (E. Frankel, 230). Just as the story of Adam and Eve teaches about the roots of shame, eating from the Tree of Knowledge does not lead simply to an awareness, or knowledge, of good and evil but to a blurring of the boundaries between the two.

Perfectionism seeks to defy the essence of humanity and is the enemy of wholeness. Embracing one's imperfections becomes essential to healing. In fact there is a movement encompassing the spirituality of imperfection. “Spirituality is discovered in that space between paradoxes and extremes, for there we confront our helplessness and powerlessness and our woundedness. In seeking to understand our limitations, we seek not only an easing of our pain but an understanding of what it means to hurt and what it means to be healed. Spirituality begins with the acceptance that our fractured being, our imperfection, is...to accept the imperfection that lies at the very core of our human be-ing” (Kurtz, 3). This description of the spirituality of imperfection notes the paradoxical nature of existence. Harriett Rossetto, founder of Beit T’shuvah, said that the spiritual ailments residents experience is due in part to the fact that, “We live in a binary world- you are either successful or not, attractive or not, etc. This is a process of integration of traits. Our challenge is to use them in proper measure.” If humans are truly created in *b’tzelem elohim*, in the image of God, then the imperfection and duality that exists within each of us must also exist within God. Isaiah 45:6-7 says, “There is nothing outside of me. I am YHVH and there is nothing else. Forming light and creating darkness; making shalom [peace] and creating evil. I am YHVH who does all these.” This text exemplifies the juxtapositions within God-self. “Evil, according to the Kabbalah, is an aspect of God, for nothing exists outside of God...Even Satan is characterized as just another one of God’s angels, one who ultimately serves a helpful role in the larger Divine scheme of things” (E. Frankel, 228). Brokenness can emerge when one expects only good from God or suffering as an absence of God. If the individual can accept the dualisms that exist within God, then they must accept their own faults and embrace imperfection. After all, in Genesis 32, God and self are blurred. Jacob having left

home after the fracturing of his relationship with his brother, Esau, feels fear and distress. In a moment where he feels completely alone "Jacob was left alone, and an *ish*, a man, wrestled with him until daybreak." The text does not say who this *ish* was. Jacob believes it is God, but some commentators say that this defining moment of wrestling with God, is also Jacob wrestling with himself, with his soul. It is Jacob wrestling with his past, his fear and sadness, his guilt, and he emerges transformed as Israel. The name Israel tells the story of a people who continue to wrestle with God. Like Jacob, transformed into Israel, each individual is entangled with God. It is through the development of the relationship *bein adam l'Makom* that the relationship *bein adam l'atzmo* is further strengthened.

"Before there could be light, darkness had to be created. The fact that darkness is a womb from which all life emerges is understood by the Kabbalah to have a deep spiritual significance. It implies an understanding that creation, in all its forms, emerges out of its opposite, the state of emptiness... Just as creation emerges out of a state of primordial darkness and emptiness, in our own lives, we find that it is most often the dark night of the soul, the existential crisis of meaning and faith...ultimately compels us to grow and birth new dimensions of ourselves" (E. Frankel, 18-19). Within this acknowledgement of the opposites within God and ourselves is an inherent hope that from darkness light must come forth, from suffering meaning emerges.The search for the authentic self is the work of reconciling *yetzer hara* and *yetzer tov*, to peel back the layers of shame in order to see oneself as truly created in the image of God with a Divine purpose.

Rabbi Elyse Frishman references Yalkut Shemoni Isaiah 429 which says, "If one sees a pot in his dreams, he should expect peace' what does a pot have to do with peace? Two of the most opposite things in this world are fire and water. They cannot exist together. The water will

extinguish the fire, or the fire will evaporate the water. Yet if you put a pot between them they both can exist. The pot brings *shalom* between these two opposing substances. The pot symbolizes the ability to make *shalom...Shalom* means "wholeness"'; it enables separate items to function purposefully together. Like fire and water, our soul and God cannot blend' God's fire would absorb us. The body comes between us and God; the body is the pot that contains the soul. Our existential puzzle is that we are God's creation, so we seek oneness with God." (Frishman, 2010). Personal wholeness and connection to God is in the middle of these oppositional forces. The work of soul repair is to have an internal dialogue that says, "I am a very complex being and yes I definitely did that thing, and I live with that, and yet I am more than that thing...We are not remaking ourselves, but we don't have to stay stuck (Geringer and Weiner, 2020). The work of *bein adam l'atzmo* is solely about the individual in relationship with the other two levels of peace. These can feel in conflict when one's worth is so dependent upon the approval of others. "When we spend a lifetime trying to distance ourselves from the parts of our lives that don't fit with who we think we're supposed to be, we stand outside of our story and hustle for our worthiness by constantly performing, perfecting, pleasing and proving. Our sense of worthiness—that critically important piece that gives us access to love and belonging—lives inside of our story" (Brown, 23)

The tension of reconciling the conflicting traits within each of us leads to this awareness: just as good and bad can exist within us, so too brokenness is not necessarily the opposite of wholeness. Even when one feels *shleimut*, that pain exists within. "The spirituality of imperfection speaks to those who speak meaning in the absurd, peace within the chaos, light within the darkness, joy within the suffering—without denying the reality and even the necessity

of absurdity, chaos, darkness, and suffering...We all have known that experience, for to be human is to feel at times divided, fractured, pulled in a dozen directions...and to yearn for serenity, for some healing." (Kurtz) Strength can be found from trying to derive meaning from the brokenness. This is also a paradox. "Though our hearts may be broken and our lives awash in chaos, we may sense a newfound inner strength and resilience that have been born out of our difficulties (E. Frankel, 15). The pathway to wholeness begins with staying in the feelings, to feel discomfort of pain, to embrace the brokenness, to let go of shame by knowing that a person is neither good nor bad, but human and imperfect.

These three levels of peace - *bein adam l'Makom*, *bein adam l'chavero*, and *bein adam l'atzmo*- can contain brokenness, yet none can be ignored on the path to wholeness.

Chapter 3: Guide to wholeness and *Un'taneh Tokef* case study

The Jewish calendar symbolizes the cyclical transitions from brokenness to wholeness and back again. Recognizing this, the pathways to achieving wholeness are more understandable. "Cultivating a Wholehearted life is not like trying to reach a destination. It's like walking toward a star in the sky. We never really arrive, but we certainly know that we're heading in the right direction" (Brown, xiv). This section will outline the pathway towards achieving wholeness, understanding that it is more about the process than the destination. The thesis has outlined that peace and wholeness occurs on multiple levels in relationship, and also that this process is not linear but cyclical. Brokenness emerges out of chaos, and from the brokenness, God tried to establish order, going day by day and culminating with the creation of mankind. Just as God craved order from the chaos, so too, humans need structure. Rosh Hashanah, the new year, "is a time for starting fresh for taking stock, and for identifying ways to be better—not ways to be perfect" (Goldberg, Marder, Marder, & Shapiro, 2015). This cyclical nature of life and death, joy and sorrow, brokenness and wholeness,is a reminder that much of existence is beyond human control. One can feel lost in this intricate web, unsure of where they stand. *Un'taneh Tokef*, the prayer central to the High Holidays emphasizes how each of us is connected through an intricate web to God and to one another, that no one is insignificant, "For every human hand leaves its mark an imprint like no other" (*Un'taneh Tokef*, Liturgy). *Un'taneh Tokef* amplifies our mortality, reminding us that God created the world but human beings are flesh and blood. The poem is constructed as a "series of tensions, contrasts, contradictions, and paradoxes that build to a dramatic climax" (Wenig, 2009). The liturgical poem begins, "Who shall live, and who shall

die, who by water and who by fire". These are seemingly opposites. "In Jewish mysticism, wholeness is understood to be essentially paradoxical. The Hebrew word for wholeness, sheleimut, which comes from the same Hebrew root (shin-lamed-mem) as shalom (peace) is not seen as a static condition but as the dynamic interplay of opposites balancing one another. The very letters in the common root shin-lamed-mem suggest that wholeness involves the balancing of polar forces, for the first letter, shin, signifies fire; while the last letter mem signifies water. It is when the water and fire, symbols of creation and destruction, coexist in balance that we find wholeness and peace. In this sense of peace and wholeness exist paradoxically when opposites are contained within a unifying vessel" (E Frankel, 213). This central text highlights this paradoxical nature of life and death, and that it is within this tension that wholeness can exist. Similarly, Jonathan Crane, Rabbi and Professor of Bioethics and Jewish Thought at Emory College, says that an individual only knows peace when it is juxtaposed to times of conflict. Similarly with music, music is juxtaposed to silence. In Star of Redemption, Franz Rosenzweig notes that every civilization marks time making certain days and different seasons holier than others. Life cycle and holy days add rhythm and syncopation to life. Holiness can only be discerned in comparison with the mundane.

After the questions of who will live and who will die, the answer to how to live is "*...utshuvah, utfilah, utzdakah, maavirin et roah hag'zeirah*...but through return to the right path, through prayer and righteous giving, we can transcend the harshness of the decree." "Distinctly human tasks can save us from that mortal fear [of death]—by reviving and revealing our spiritual life" (Hoffman, 149). These acts are a reminder of one's purpose because they connect the individual to themself, to their fellow, and to God. *T'shuvah, t'filah, and tzedakah* involve

engagement, they return us to the pathway of life and wholeness. While God remember and records everything, these three things: *t'shuvah*, *t'filah*, *tzedakah*, should not be understood as determining whether the individual will live or die, or the means of their death, whether by fire or by water, but "They might make it easier for us to deal with the inevitable consequences of the hardships that come in life. In life there is so much beyond our control. This notion, that regardless of our actions, even if we are devout in prayer, repentance, and charity, does not eliminate our hardship, for we are still mortal. However having those practices are healing mechanisms to cope with the hardship of the decree" (Hoffman, 43). These elements concluding *Un'taneh Tokef* can provide some ascension from the depths as one is experiencing the hardship of the decree. It is not a guarantee and can never fully heal the pain and suffering. In fact, the whole prayer is a question of who? But at its core it's about why? This is the first step, to lament, cry out, and question.

Lamentations

While telling one's story is another essential element of wholeness and integration of self, before one can form a narrative, lament is the first stage to processing the existing chaos. Rachel Adler, in an article entitled, "For These Things I Weep: A Theology of Lament" says that Lamentations is the doorway from brokenness, to put into language the unspeakable. "Lamentations is an expression of the suffering and grief associated with the calamity of destruction...In laments human beings bewail all that hurts about being human: having bodies that hurt; being mortal; suffering brutality at the hands of others; losing control over our lives;

losing kin; losing home; losing freedom; being tormented by memories of happier times or by memories of horrific occurrences; feeling abandoned by an indifferent or actively punitive God" (Adler, 2006). When words are not available, an expression of lament can be fasting and part of a mourning ceremony. The process of lamenting is so core to our being that there is an entire book of the Bible dedicated to it. Lament is important because it allows the mourner to fully focus on the present. This kind of openness to experience may assist the individual in seeing that thoughts and emotions themselves are not dangerous. Being present to emotion is often informative, and in the case of moral injury, emotions such as guilt can actually be important to understanding how one might choose to live in the future. Guilt is not the enemy. Many studies show that individuals are able to find meaning in life's events both terrible and positive, for "This tendency to see meaning in life events seems to reflect a more general aspect of human nature: our powerful drive to reason in psychological terms, to make sense of events and situations by appealing to goals, desires, and intentions" (Banerjee & Bloom, 2014). However, of course, the world is not a fair place, where goodness is rewarded and badness punished. Life and the world is much more complicated. This is why before coming to terms with meaning, lament is so important. It is a plea for comfort in the form of access to God, even though the plea may never be answered directly; God remains distant, and so the state of mourning cannot end. There are many expressions of lament. It can be public or personal. It can be tied to an individual experience, or a communal experience. It can be, "Lament for the dead, lament by the sick, and the disheartened, communal laments over lost battles, destroyed cities, and states and eventually, for other communal catastrophes" (Adler, 2006).

Yet, Reform Jews have not made much room for lament in communal life. Early Reform worshippers who wanted their services to be “uplifting” were dismayed by the negativity of lament and by the disorderly universe it depicted and so the anger at God in lament texts was removed from Reform liturgy. The national events to which lament was tied (destruction of the Temple and subsequent exile) were not seen by Reform theology as tragic, but rather, necessary (ibid). Reform Judaism of the 19th century did not see *Tisha B’av* or the destruction of the Temple as worthy of mourning. According to Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman in an article published by the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle “ Reform Judaism of the 19th century...didn’t consider the destruction of the Temple to be a disaster, because it ended the temple cult and signaled an evolution of the Jewish people to a higher purpose” (Chottiner et al., 2011). The Movement’s “ambivalence and complicated” feelings, as Hoffman describes, was fixated on the details surrounding the Temple rather than the mourning and power in the expression of lament. He marks that Jewish summer camp embraced the holiday as a learning experience. “[The Jewish summer camps] did not pay all that much attention to the temple and sacrificial cult, Hoffman they used it as a memorial for the Holocaust and martyrdom throughout Jewish history” (ibid). A similar theme begins to emerge, that there has been a fear of engaging with the negative. Individuals and communities may feel that questioning their faith, or expressing lament would be tantamount to challenging authority which could cause further angst. Acknowledging an injured party though is imperative for healing for, “Moral repair will not succeed if one party is placed in an inferior moral position, seen as having less right to define the situation than those in authority. When people are told by authority ‘this is how *we* see it and how *we* see it is what counts’, they are not being treated as moral equals" (Shale, 2020). This is a dramatic change of perspective, to

view human beings as equally deserving of goodness and morality as God. However it is ironic: "We want to repair the world and yet we are reluctant to acknowledge that everything is broken, including ourselves" (Adler 2006). Laments are necessary to vocalize the pain before one can be comforted. "Lament can help us to bear witness to violence and injustice in the life of the community, to respond with indignation and outrage and then with constructive action. We do not know and will not know why God does not protect us from atrocities or genocide or why God created a world which can be devastated by tsunamis or hurricanes, but we can express our anger, our grief, our sense of abandonment. We can bring to God not only our best behaved happy selves but also selves seized by despair, brokenness, a thirst for revenge, and other so-called "unacceptable" feelings. This is lament, the first step in reconstituting the broken world" (ibid). As seen on January 6, 2021 after white-superemacist, domestic terrorists infiltrated the Senate, Senator Chuck Schumer lamented saying "We can now add January 6th 2021 as a day that will live infamy. This temple to democracy was desecrated, its windows smashed our offices vandalized" (Schumer, 2020). After Schumer's remarks, fellow Congressmen and women had the opportunity to express their grief and as each individual spoke, they gained strength in one another's commitment to democracy. It is possible that this expression of grief and shame over the brokenness gave these leaders the strength to confirm Joe Biden as the President of the United States. The Book of Lamentations says that the nation of Israel is not alone in their grief but that God mourns alongside them. God says "My eyes are spent with tears, My heart is in tumult, My being melts away Over the ruin of my poor people, As babes and sucklings languish In the squares of the city" (Lamentations 2:11). In order to see

oneself as truly created in the image of God, God must be seen as having a full range of emotions including anger and sadness, so that the opportunity to fully lament and heal is possible.

At certain moments, the Book of Lamentations seems to look beyond the destruction to hold out hope for the future, but in the end despair overcomes hope. Past and future have little place in the book. "It centers on the 'present'—the moment of trauma, the interminable suffering" (Berlin, 18). In order to emerge with faith and hope, however, the initial steps of punishment, and repentance may result in exile and a deep isolation. One of the most beloved texts from Lamentations asks for renewal to come from grief: "*Hashivenu Adonai eilech v'nashuva, chadeish yameinu k'kedem...* Return us to You, Adonai, and we will return; renew our days as of old." (Lamentations 5:21) While lament is not listed as one of the ways to transcend the harshness of the decree in *Un'taneh tokef*, in order to even engage in the present or find renewal through prayer, study, and acts of righteousness, lament is a critical first step.

T'filah

The categories of *t'filah, tzedakah*, and *t'shuvah* all happen on the three-fold plane, however prayer is most often thought of as *bein adam l'Makom*, in a private moment between an individual and God. Liturgy mirrors both the cyclical and paradoxical nature of life. In Judaism there is a prayer for virtually every time, circumstance and emotion. Within one prayer or ritual can exist expressions of joy and sorrow. One of the most joyful moments in the life cycle is the wedding ceremony. Yet, in the midst of this happy occasion, the best known custom, breaking of the glass is a reminder that life and love are fragile, capable of shattering. Another explanation of this custom is that the breaking of the glass is a reminder of the destruction of the Temple.

Expanded further than the Temple, the breaking of the glass is a reminder of the pain and suffering that existed before, and will inevitably come again. Outside of this life cycle, looking at the verses of *L'cha Dodi*, this poem composed by 16th century Safed kabbalist Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz, has nine verses. These nine verses range in emotion, celebrating the beauty of Shabbat, and then in the same prayer recalling the sorrow, shame and degradation of Israel. Interestingly, and echoing the notion that the Reform Movement has avoided expressions of lament, the *minhag* or custom in many Reform congregations is to omit the verses of anger and sadness (verses 3,6, and 7).

The liturgy is constructed to take the pray-er through the range of human emotion and human experience. The act of praying can be used as a spiritual practice to aid in the process of moving from a state of brokenness to wholeness. "When a religious person solicits prayer and God's grace to help them through this crisis, a step is taken to ground oneself in a daily practice that will nourish and sustain them through their roller-coaster ride of fear and joy" (Farneth, Gross, & Schnable, 2009). Prayer is a way of expressing lament, however it is grounded in tradition and history, providing an initial step in finding language amidst chaos. Since liturgy and Jewish texts as a whole span the human experience, when one cannot find the words, turning to liturgy is a way of finding the language to express the inner feelings of the soul.

An example in the Torah of prayer being the vehicle for finding language to reach out and connect to God is the story of Channah in 1 Samuel 1. Channah is a woman of deep piety and spiritual grace. Channah cries out to God because she is devastated that she has been unable to conceive a child. In her time of darkness, she ascends the House of the Eternal and, "She

pray[s] to the Eternal—weeping and crying" (1 Samuel 1:10). The rabbis of the Talmud write about Channah in *Talmud B'rachot* 31a:

> "How many important laws we can learn from these verses relating to Channah!
>
> *Now Channah, she spoke in her heart*— From this we learn that one who prays must direct the heart [i.e, pray with focused intention]."

Channah's prayer of spontaneity is a model for the structure of prayer. She invokes God at the beginning, speaks in second person, petitions God, makes a promise in the form of a vow and bargaining, and then she asks God to hear her prayer and grant her request. Channah believes she is alone when she prays however Eli mistakenly accuses her of being drunk saying to her, "How long will you persist in drunkenness? Put away your wine--get rid of it" (1 Samuel 1:14). Eli shames Channah in her darkest moment. In reply Channah describes her prayer saying to him "...I poured out my soul before the Eternal...All this time I have spoken from the depth of my anger, from the greatest of my grievance" (1 Samuel 1:15-16). At Channah's most distressed moment, after completing her prayer, Eli the Priest makes *t'shuvah* by responding with the blessing, *l'chi l'shalom*, "Go in peace" (1 Samuel 1:18). He recognizes his own mistake and her extreme brokenness and blesses her with the greatest blessing of peace. It seems that her prayer and her interaction with Eli brought her some wholeness, for the text says, "The woman went on her way; and she ate, and her face was no longer as it had been" (1 Samuel 18). It appears that her prayer to God *bein adam l'Makom*, is what healed her own feelings of brokenness and anger about her inability to conceive a child transforming it to a prayer *bein adam l'atzmo*. Additionally, Eli's acknowledgement of her broken state - his "seeing" her accurately - and his acknowledgement of his error were a big part of her healing. In a way, then, this story

encompasses both *bein adam l'chavero* , and *bein adam l'Makom*. These are what enable her to nourish her body. Not only does she conceive and bear a child, but he is a prophet, Samuel. It is her heartfelt plea that is the model and prototype of all prayers to come.

Mention of peace is made at the conclusion of all major pieces of liturgy. This repetition and insistence, especially the prayer for peace at the end of the Amidah, serves a three-fold function relevant since the formation of the prayers. First, it expresses a very human desire to live peacefully in this world, an eternal wish. Second, it is a call, a reminder, and an incentive for humans to take full responsibility for following the paths of Torah, making moral decisions, and being wholesomely human (Crane, 1999). The most ancient prayer for peace, *Birkat Kohanim*, comes from the Bible and consists of three verses, Numbers 6:24-26. The value of *shalom* is the most hallowed of Jewish values and is a central focus of Biblical and Rabbinic texts, and daily liturgy. It serves as the final benediction, the final hope, as to encompass all of the rest of the *amidah*. Regardless of the day and the season, there is a prayer for peace. The language of the liturgy has been changed from particularism to universalism and back again (from *al kol yisrael*, "May all Israel receive peace" to *al kol yoshvei tevel*, "May all dwellers on the earth receive peace."). This change of language indicates the community's deep desire to both give and receive blessings, to be deemed holy, to feel the connection to their ancestors, and feel God's presence, and yet to feel special.

Debbie Friedman's renowned *Mi Shebeirach* emerged from her desire to transform a prayer usually directed in the form of a request to God to a prayer that empowers the wounded to unravel and transform their own pain. She writes, "With this, you become the messenger. We are not just the recipients of blessings, but the messengers of blessings as well. Remember, out of

what emerges from life's painful challenges will come our healing. And ultimately, our greatest healing will come when we use our suffering to heal another's pain – "to release another from their confinement." This prayer, *Mi Shebeirach*, she writes, "gave us the words we needed to address our pain" She wrote this prayer "acknowledging our fragility and our brokenness. We knew that we were alone and yet not alone, that we were in a community and however isolated we might have felt before this experience, were now a part of something much greater" (Friedman, 2002). Friedman acknowledges the power of praying in community; this is why many prayers in Judaism require a *minyan* of 10 people to be present. In the most vulnerable and lonely of times, such as after experiencing the death of a loved one, Jews are commanded to be with others to support them.

While prayers can be recited alone and privately, there is power in praying with another person. There is a mystical significance to communal prayers, "The recitation of significant prayers such as the *Shema, Amidah,* and *Hallel* and of particular psalms helps restore the *sefirot* system to balance. Public prayer in the synagogue is particularly effective in the process of *tikkun*" (Rosenthal, 224). Similarly, studies on prayer in hospitals have shown that while individuals can pray on their own, "The chaplain can listen to her suffering from her truest woundedness without judgment or advice, without conjuring up defeat or dismissiveness without self-criticism and family expectations and dynamics. The chaplain offers her a place of repose, a place of being/ness and not doing/ness, a place to be honest, a place to be held in the agony of her situation in God's lap of unconditional loving and grace. And, finally, the chaplain offers her the presence of God in the green pastures of her restoration (both physical and spiritual) and adds another way for her to emphatically say, Amen" (Farneth, Gross, & Schnable, 2009). As

Friedman's *Mi Shebeirach* concludes, "May the Source of strength who blessed the ones before us, help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing, and let us say Amen" (Friedman 2002). When one has a fractured relationship to God, prayer can still be a way of accessing the strength that lies within oneself, and doing so can provide a sense of wholeness in the relationship *bein adam l'Makom*.

Prayer is the 11th of the 12 steps, "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His Will for us and the power to carry that out" (A.A., 2001). The Big Book of A.A. suggests that prayer is a time to review the day, to assess if any apologies are in order, where one missed the mark, or how one could improve, and then take those corrective measures. Prayer is a way of acknowledging that things are out of control and opening up for help beyond oneself. Similarly, prayer can set the tone for the day ahead, "that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems." (A.A., 2001). The serenity prayer that concludes A.A. meetings acknowledge the balance between petitioning God for attainable human responses to chaos and the goal of achieving peace. "There are different forms of prayer and meditation, yet each is a way to untangle and silence the mind so that we can listen to the heart and soul" (Steinberg, 128). In the words of Debbie Friedman, "While we know full well that healing of the body may not be a possibility, we know that healing of the soul has infinite possibilities. There are times when we feel like we are in the midst of a living nightmare. We cannot imagine that anything will ever look 'right' again. At some point, we must be willing to confront the pain, the enemy, and befriend it; that it may become not only our teacher, but a teacher to all of those who are in our circle of life, our

community. Jewish life was not meant for us to experience alone; not the joy and not the sorrow" (Friedman, 2002). Prayer is the essential step prior to *t'shuvah* and being able to find the strength from the ultimate Source to transform faith into action.

Tzedakah

Rabbi Hillel writes on the complexity of the relationships to oneself, one another, and to God, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself who I am? And if not now when?" (Pirkei Avot 1:14). The path to healing within oneself, *bein adam l'atzmo*, can involve reaching outside of oneself, *bein adam l'chavero* through acts of *tzedakah*. "Doing for others releases us from the fear of fearing for ourselves. All humans suffer. Yet pain is diminished when serving others. Putting our life into a larger context gives perspective and hope. Pain has no meaning, but life does" (Frishman). *Tzedakah* can be translated in a few ways to mean both acts of justice and obligations of charitable giving. *Tzedakah* is a commitment whether or not the heart is moved to act in that way. *Tzedakah* is said to bring redemption (Bava Batra 10a) and saves one from death (Shabbat 156b.) This is also not to say that giving tzedakah is a determining factor to avoid suffering or death, but giving is a way of stirring the heart. Out of commitment, the person who gives feels a sense of joy and accomplishment, and connection to God. "The principle is that giving arouses the heart to love. By obligating ourselves to give according to rules and formula, we expose our hearts to repetitive acts of giving that leave their trace on our inner lives. The very act of giving itself ultimately makes us more charitable, merciful, and loving" (Morinis, 2009). Giving *tzedakah* is a way of stirring one out of

complacency through the form of fulfilling an obligation to make the world more whole. “Do not hide yourself from your own flesh and blood’—“Do not turn your back on the poor; recognize your kinship with them. For the prophet, we are all one family, united in our humanity; and without one another, our community is not whole” (Isaiah 58:7)

The value of justice is reinforced over and over again in the words of the prophets. The primary example of a pursuer of justice on Yom Kippur is the prophet Isaiah. His words are meant to both stir the congregation from complacency and comfort them. “Second Isaiah does not passively accept Zion’s lot. Far from being silent, he challenges the Lord, putting the Lord in remembrance...the prophet voices his bewilderment at the silence of the Almighty...More excruciating than the experience of suffering is the agony of sensing no meaning in suffering…” (Heschel 186-7). Prayer alone is not enough. The words on Yom Kippur by the prophet Isaiah speak loudly about the importance of justice as a means of achieving full *t’shuvah* and peace on the High Holidays, the season of return. Rituals of fasting and self-affliction are not sufficient for atonement. “His words are intended to be as discordant as a shofar blast, shattering complancancy and disrupting the normal ceremonies of the holy day. The prophet notes, ironically, that God pays no heed to the people’s ritual acts of fasting and prostration; their hypocritical displays of piety fall, as it were, on deaf ears. Only if these rituals are accompanied by humility, generosity, and care for the needy will God ‘hear’ the worshipers and attend to their call...God, it seems, understands and responds to the language of compassion” (Goldberg, Marder, Marder, & Shapiro, 2015).

Just as acts of justice influence the relationship to oneself and other humans, so too do the acts of *tzedakah* have a larger purpose. “According to Kabbalah, not only can God influence us;

we can influence God! Any human action on earth has the power to affect the Divine. Performing the commandments correctly promotes Divine union; sinning causes Divine separation. Moreover, according to the Zohar, the messiah will arrive only if one community acts piously and is completely repentant" (Koren, 38). Meaning can be derived by pursuing action. According to Kabbalah, *tzedakah* gives purpose: "Each of us, according to Luria, has a role in the task of healing and mending the world, or *tikkun olam*. Our job is to redeem and elevate the fallen, exiled sparks of divinity by finding and extracting the good that exists in all things, including evil. We do this through the mindful performance of *mitzvot*, or Divine commandments, and by living our lives in holiness, and by acting justly and righteously. This work is the very purpose of all existence" (E. Frankel, 30).

Beyond the cosmic importance of acts of *tzedakah*, is the impact acts of righteousness have between human beings. "Justice is not important for its own sake; the validity of justice and the motivation for its exercise lie in the blessings it brings to man...Justice exists in relation to a person, and is something done by a person. An act of injustice is condemned, not because a person has been hurt. What is the image of a person? A person is a being whose anguish may reach the heart of God" (Heschel, 186-7). The words *umaavirin et ro-ah hagzerah* in *Un'taneh Tokef* exemplify an element of human autonomy in the midst of helplessness. "I matter. You matter. I have a holy soul. I am imperfect by design. My value is a birthright. Change is possible and mandatory. Right action is the bridge to wholeness of self" (Rossetto, 67). Viktor Frankl saw three possible sources for meaning: in work (doing something significant), in love (caring or another person), and in courage during difficult times. *Tzedakah* is a way of responding to

suffering and in doing so transforms an individual from self-seeking and self-involved, to trusting of the self to connect meaningfully to others and to God.

T'shuvah

"*T'shuvah*, this inborn longing for wholeness, perfection, and unity, lies at the heart of all Jewish healing" (E. Frankel, 130). Ritual action in the form of justice is the purest form of *t'shuvah*. *T'shuvah* has deep layers of meaning, but its root translates to "return." *T'shuvah* is at the heart of Jewish healing, and at the core of High Holiday worship. The prayer book for the High Holidays, the *machzor*, the root of which is "cycle" echoes not only the essence of life, but the flow of *t'shuvah*. "The implication [of *t'shuvah*] is that we all have within us a reference point for wholeness to which we can return—a spiritual essence encoded within our souls that enables us to remember who we really are. *T'shuvah* is not something one does once and for all; rather, it is a lifelong journey, a journey of spiritual homecoming" (E. Frankel, 129). *T'shuvah*, is taking responsibility for one's actions in the past and moving forward. This is the core part of soul repair and finding peace in all three-planes of relationship.

T'shuvah was created by God as an acknowledgement that humanity is not perfect and will inevitably make mistakes. Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 3:3 says, "Seven things were created before the world was created. They are: The Torah, Gehinnom, the Garden of Eden, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, Repentance (*t'shuvah*), and the Name of the Messiah." God's creation of *t'shuvah* is the answer to free will, "Man is at core a free agent, the master in essentials of his own decisions...To the rule that men are susceptible to sin, the Tradition recognizes no

exception. Perfection is not a human trait. To be totally free from error and evil is simply not possible to men... Nor, according to the Tradition, has perfection ever been attained by anyone, not even by the saint or prophet. All transgressed and suffered moral defeat... What is more, Judaism does not expect perfection from man... It is too sensible to ask that man walk but never slip. To the contrary it predicts that he will not only slip but fall also. Its guidance is directed to the end that he shall so walk as to fall as little as possible, and, having fallen, will pick himself up, brush off the dust and go on, wiser, surer of himself and of the good he seeks" (Steinberg, 1987). *T'shuvah* assumes within the cycle of life and human experience, that brokenness will occur and one will feel lost and a need to return to self.

The return to self begins with looking inward to repair the relationship *bein adam l'atzmo*. Just as humankind and the Divine share attributes of *yetzer hara* and *yetzer tov*, the opportunity for *t'shuvah* grants the individual the opportunity to take on the Divine quality of creation. "Repentance... is an act of creation—self-creation. The severing of one's psychic identity with one's previous 'I,' and the creation of a new 'I," possessor of a new consciousness, a new heart and spirit, different desires, longings, goals...A person is creative; he was endowed with the power to create at his very inception. When he finds himself in a situation of sin, he takes advantage of his creative capacity, returns to God, and becomes a creator and self-fashioner. Man, through repentance, creates himself, his own 'I' (Soloveitchik, 110). The ability of humankind to take part in the creation and re-creation of self is the biggest triumph of *yetzer hatov* over *yetzer hara*. Even this new form of 'I' as Soloveitchik describes, which emerges from a process of reflection and soul-searching, is still one that will err, make mistakes, and have imperfection; this is why Elul, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur appear year after year.

The spiritual process of Yom Kippur is an affirmation that God believes in humankind's possibility of continual improvement. Just as God forgives, so too does true *t'shuvah* require letting go of constant self-criticism and guilt over not achieving perfection, learning from the past, and looking towards the future and engaging in a re-creation of self.

The interconnection between self and others is presented in the Torah reading for Yom Kippur. Deuteronomy 29-30 tells of a moment of communal solidarity, as all Israel stands before God to make an oath. The Reform Movement's *machzor*, *Mishkan HaNefesh*, also includes an alternative reading about the first human family, and specifically tells the story of Cain's murder of his brother, Abel. Cain is overwhelmed with feelings of jealousy and insecurity. He is furious that God does not accept his offering and God warns, "Sin crouches like a beast at the door: you are what it craves; and yet—you can overcome it" (Genesis 4:8). The Big Book of A.A. says that selfishness and self-centeredness are the root of trouble. "Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows...above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!" (A.A., 2001). Consumed by self-pity, Cain kills his brother and upon God's discovery of Cain's actions, Cain is further punished as God is, "hidden from [his] presence" (Genesis 4:14). Cain's punishment is one of loneliness. Cain has been used as an example of the dangers of succumbing. He is not praised by the rabbis as Aaron the High priest is because, "[Aaron] loved peace and pursued it". Aaron is one who pursued not the peace of society, but peace in individual affairs. Aaron invested a great deal of effort to restore harmony among individuals in confrontation. However, in rabbinic texts, Cain is credited with being the first penitent. Genesis Rabbah 22:13 says, " 'Cain went out from the Lord's presence…' (Gen. 4:16): Cain ran into

Adam and said: ‘How did your judgment go?’ Cain said: "I made repentance and was pardoned." Adam began to smack his own face and said: "Thus is the power of repentance, and I did not know!?" Immediately, Adam stood and said, “It is good to praise the Lord...” (Psalm 92).” This powerful midrash tells of a beautiful reconciliation between father and son. The Torah does not describe Adam and Eve’s reaction to the fratricide and they are relatively silent throughout, but one can only imagine the broken-heartedness, the pain caused by Cain’s violence. The act of *t'shuvah* enabled healing and perhaps an even stronger connection than existed before.

Maimonides’ *Hilchot Teshuvah* says that one who has fallen and been redeemed holds a higher place in the Divine realm than one who has never fallen” (Rossetto, 44). The idea that brokenness is what actually makes a being both “whole-ier” and holier is echoed throughout the Mishnah. *Mishkan Keilim 2:1* speaks about vessels made of different materials, and how, paradoxically, they are made *tahor* (pure, or ritually fit) if they become *tamei* (impure, or ritually unfit). For certain vessels, if they are broken, they are made pure. Stated even more simply and strikingly at the end of this mishnah: *shviratan hi taharatan*, their brokenness is their purity. In their breaking, they are returned to a state of ritual acceptance and are able to be used for the most sanctified purposes.

After looking inward and connecting with other human beings in a process of self-reflection, the wholeness begins to radiate out to healing the relationship between an individual and God. “Sin causes the Divine letters of the Tetragrammaton to separate. What helps unite them? The study of Torah because the very word Torah contains the four letters of the sacred Name. In like fashion, the act of *t'shuvah*, repentance, remakes a human being by removing his or her flaws caused by sin, repairs the flaw in the supernal world, and achieves

tikkun for all: on high, down below, for the individual who repents, and the entire world" (Rosenthal, 224).

"...*Uteshuvah, utfilah, utzedakah, maavirin et roah hag'zeirah"*, "...But through return to the right path, through prayer and righteous giving, we can transcend the harshness of the decree." These concepts aid in the wholeness process, healing broken relationships on the three-fold level of *bein Makom*, *chavero*, and *l'atzmo*, and emphasizing that the engagement in these acts that stems from brokenness is ultimately essential to wholeness.

Chapter 4: Paving the way from brokenness to wholeness

This thesis has outlined some key Jewish symbols of brokenness that were created in response to the environment in which they developed, and continue to influence how Jews respond to tragedy and suffering. Each of the metaphors for brokenness contains a common theme of shame, loneliness, and a loss of purpose. In seeing and understanding the roots of brokenness, the pathway to wholeness becomes clearer and more attainable; hope can begin to emerge. There are leaders and communities within the Jewish world who understand these roots of brokenness and see the core of their mission as bringing the individual and their community to a state of *shleimut*.

Beit T'shuvah, Los Angeles, CA:

The bulk of this research was greatly informed and inspired by the memoir of Harriet Rossetto, founder of Beit T'shuvah - a residential addiction treatment center based in Los Angeles that now has a branch in New York. Initially founded as a gateway for Jewish prisoners to transition from prison to an integrated life, Rossetto envisioned, "A Jewish home based on love and learning, where wounded people could heal their broken souls and reconnect with their families, themselves, and God. It would be a place of 12 Steps, Judaism, and psychotherapy, a place to reintegrate into a meaningful life. They could make *t'shuvah*: admit their wrongdoing, make amends and restitution, and plan how not to re-offend, to make different choices" (Rossetto, 47-48). Rossetto's inspiration to create a Jewish home of recovery came from her own experiences of brokenness. She described her role as a Jewish social worker at a prison saying

"Everyday in my mission, I felt like I was fighting a holy war—struggling to balance the good and evil I was witnessing, working hard so I could mirror wholeness back to the divided souls behind the glass...this much I knew- I wasn't going to heal anyone else if I couldn't heal myself and make peace with my own extremes, incongruities, and dark impulses as well" (Rossetto, 32). Her own desire for wholeness to repair her relationship *bein adam l'atzmo* was essential in her work establishing Beit T'shuvah for others to heal the shattered relationships in their own lives. She credits her experience meeting Mark Borovitz, when he was a prisoner, and her now husband, Rabbi and "Partner-in-Redemption" as the key to their success. She writes about him saying, "Mark is a warrior—his demons are fierce and he 'wrestles' with them out loud...He is an exemplar of spiritual imperfection, demanding of himself and everyone else that they fight to defeat the demon we all have that tells us we are not worthy of God's love" (Rosetto, 155).

The concepts of guilt, sin and atonement are not theoretical for Rossetto and her residents. Shame is a key factor in addiction. Addiction is the hole-in-the-soul, it's a voice that says you are broken and that, "Somehow when God made You and God messed up- why am I so wrong? All the negative voices of judgement that say 'I am bad'" The residents of Beit T'shuvah are diverse in many ways including their religious observance—not all patients are Jewish, and even within the scope of Judaism there have been residents ranging from Chassidic rabbis to those born into a Jewish family but not necessarily identifying as Jewish. Aside from their religious observances, they are diverse in terms of their socioeconomic backgrounds as well as the precise nature of their addictions and crimes. Regardless though, all are human beings who have a deep feeling of brokenness and have tried to fill this brokenness with an addiction. A core part of this work is founded on *t'shuvah* as the answer for finding the balance between *yetzer*

hara and *yetzer tov*. Harriet Rossetto sees the creation story as formative for her theory of brokenness and says that regarding the first humans, Adam and Eve, "Their sin was not disobeying God and eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad, but their sin was hiding from God and shame and blaming one another instead of coming clean, admitting their faults and making *t'shuvah*. These demons known as Shame and Blame have been passed down from generation to generation. It's time to rewrite the story. We are all blemished. Instead of covering up our imperfections, misdeeds, and vulnerabilities we have to own and befriend them. We have to live *t'shuvah* by admitting our imperfections and misdeeds, making amends to those we have harmed, and making a plan not to repeat them. This is the heart of Jewish living and the essence of Alcoholics Anonymous. Without *t'shuvah*, Shame and Blame thrive" (Rossetto, 6).

Residents of Beit T'shuvah are required to engage in the process of *t'shuvah* by meeting in a group along with a spiritual counselor in a program called *Heshbon HaNefesh* ("Accounting of the Soul"). Residents complete a *t'shuvah* sheet prior to each session where they reflect upon the week, think about a specific task, quality, or action that they are proud of and about where they missed the mark. On the top of the worksheet are the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel as a reminder of the power of *t'shuvah* saying, "The most unnoticed of all miracles is the miracle of repentance. It is not the same as rebirth; it is transformation, creation. In the dimension of time there is no going back. But the power of repentance causes time to be created backward and allows re-creation of the past to take place. Through the forgiving hand of God, harm and blemish which we have committed against the world and against ourselves will be

extinguished, transformed into salvation" (Heschel, 1936). This weekly practice of *t'shuvah* and reflection is side by side with Torah study and A.A. meetings.

A core element of a resident's time at Beit T'shuvah is Torah study, for Torah, "is the big book of recovery from the existential, emotional and spiritual struggles of humanness...If you can see yourself in every *parasha* it is the path to *shaleim* (wholeness) and *shalom* (peace of mind)" (Rossetto, 108). Wholeness emerges as finding a personal balance within oneself. From her work with recovering addicts, the founder of Beit T'shuvah says, "The challenge of being a human being is to harness the power of the evil or dark side and redirect it to the service of God and good through taking right action" (42). This is not saying that the evil or dark is "wrong" or should be obliterated, but rather that it should be channeled in the form of acceptance and then action. She identifies this tension between the *yetzer hara* and *yetzer tov*, the good and bad essences from eating from the fruit of knowledge, several times in her book, and the balance of these forces as the most difficult aspect of recovery. "Most therapies attempt to apply an outside solution to an internal problem to treat a soul-sickness with material band-aids, believing that fixing the outsides would heal the insides. This self-deception causes the 'hole in the soul,' the gap between inside and outside that drives us to fill up with pride or food or stuff or substances, endlessly seeking, never satisfied. It is the condition that A.A. defines as 'one is too many and a thousand is never enough' (Rossetto, 38). The 12 Steps and the Torah are both referred to as *The Big Book* because both, "can serve as a spiritual remedy to alcoholism...because the nature of the remedy and the solution is spiritual." Both also require connection between individuals. Just as one studies Torah in *chevrutah*, so too does working the steps involve group therapy and a sponsor who has been through the same process. Upon completion of the 12th step, the

individual returns to the first step, just as Rabbi Ben Bag Bag says in chapter five of *Pirkei Avot*, "turn it and turn it again for everything is in it." Studying Torah, recovery, and the path to wholeness is a lifelong endeavor, to be examined over and over again, discovering new meanings and nuances with every turn and life transition. "God is both in the details and the upkeep. Everything I needed to live at peace with myself required maintenance: home, body, soul, relationships, thoughts—everything... The maintenance of sobriety requires daily discipline and effort— same prayers, same meetings, same steps, over and over again" (Rossetto, 84-6).

Engaging in *tzedakah* is paired with Step 9 of the 12 Steps. This is when the individual has, "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others" (A.A., 2001). This step involves reaching out to all the persons one has harmed and to whom the individual is willing to make amends. After engaging in self-appraisal, this step involves going out to the people in one's life and repairing the damage done in the past. A resident of Beit T'shuvah, Keith,* spoke about giving *tzedakah*, paying the many debts to employers and family members that he had accumulated as he struggled with addiction, and the sense of personal relief and accomplishment fulfilling this step brought to him. One does not have to be an addict to go through this process, as the pathway to healing and wholeness is for everyone, and there are a variety of means of justice which can empower the party experiencing moral injury to move from suffering to action. "Finding purpose" is a crucial element of Rossetto's foundation at Beit T'shuvah. A sense of purpose is key. "Whether we're overcoming adversity, surviving trauma, or dealing with stress and anxiety, having a sense of purpose, meaning, and perspective in our lives allows us to develop understanding and move forward. Without purpose, meaning, and perspective, it is easy to lose hope, numb our emotions, or

become overwhelmed by our circumstances...when we believe in that inextricable connection, we don't feel alone" (Brown, 74). Beit T'shuvah uses a combination of therapies inspired by A.A. and Jewish spirituality as a way to fill the "hole in the soul." In a lecture, David Aaron teaches that Kabbalah understands the purpose for existence as having the ultimate pleasure, the greatest gift of God's presence and love, to feel connected to a higher power. "We all want to be a someone, sum of a one, when you are part of THE ONE. When you feel a connection to the source of life, the source of wisdom, the source of love, you are filled with vitality, and this is what Judaism is all about. A universal soul that we all feel part of, this is Kabbalah. Kabbalah teaches that the ultimate gift of our life is to feel the gift of God in our lives" (Aaron, 2006). In the same spirit Rossetto says, "Every person who has come to [Beit T'shuvah] has a story of how they lost themselves. And if they make it, how they got found as well, and found the 'self' that is unique and true…[those who found their] authentic self, who found something they loved to do and work on, had greater success at sobriety. We changed our motto and mission from helping heal addiction, to helping people recover their passion and discover their purpose" (Rossetto, 115).

Rossetto says to the residents of Beit T'shuvah, "We can only be free when Moses and Pharaoh come together within us" (Rossetto, 40). Moses represents the one who wants to be free, and Pharoah is the one who feels safe in bondage. Pharaoh also represents the aggressive, hostile, violent part of every human being- the *yetzer ra*. Freedom is the ability to look forward while reconciling with the past. One can identify the things they have done wrong and feel guilt about them and redress these things. "*T'shuvah*, like the 12 steps, promised redemption, a process requiring self-examination, a searching and fearless moral inventory, admission of wrongdoings,

direct amends to whoever has been harmed by one's transgressions and a plan of action not to repeat the behavior" (Rossetto, 43). By engaging in the process of *t'shuvah* through accepting responsibility, making amends, and trying to prevent the behavior from happening again, while also acknowledging that mistakes are inevitable, every event or interaction becomes an opportunity to move toward connection and wholeness.

Concepts of brokenness are so core to Beit T'shuvah's mission that the annual fundraiser in 2021 was the "Healing Broken Souls Gala" featuring stories of redemption and hope to uplift the spirit. Additionally, every year Beit T'shuvah hosts and runs an intensive week, the "Elaine Breslow Institute," where future Jewish leaders, educators, and clergy go to Beit T'shuvah to, "help community leaders rethink what brokenness means in their own communities, and how to provide guidance and healing to each individual and family…[and that] the remedy is contained in a deeply personal and relevant Judaism. It is a Judaism that views the Torah as a guide for living as complete human beings: both holy and imperfect. The Elaine Breslow Institute at Beit T'Shuvah has been created to transmit these Torah lessons of redemption, and help lead each one of us toward a path of wholeness." (EBI, 2018). Beit T'shuvah is a model for how to forge a pathway from brokenness to wholeness in order to heal the soul and find purpose; it has already inspired generations of Jewish clergy to bring their teachings to their own communities. In addressing addiction, it is helpful to look through a lens of brokenness and wholeness, concepts which I argue in this thesis are embedded within Judaism. Even if one is not impacted by addiction, everyone on both an individual and communal level, experiences feelings and times of brokenness.

Rabbi Abraham J Twerski

The great Jewish thinkers who have combined Jewish spirituality with the 12 Steps have been inspired and influenced by one another as can be seen in Rabbi Paul Steinberg's book *Recovery, the 12 Steps and Jewish Spirituality: Reclaiming Hope, Courage & Wholeness* (2015) the Foreword of which is by Rabbi Abraham J Twerski and the Preface by Harriet Rossetto. All of them recognize the necessity of repairing one's relationship to God as part of the recovery process. "Narcotics Anonymous has a phrase: 'Within each and every soul is a God-sized hole, that only God can fill'. All of these disorders, whether they are eating or drugs or sexual, are all about trying to fill this endless craving, this void within that I don't know how to fill." Rabbi Abraham Twerski was revolutionary in integrating his background as a psychiatrist specializing in substance abuse with his training as a rabbi particularly interested in *mussar* (Jewish ethics). In 1972 he moved from working in a hospital setting to opening an inpatient facility based on his realization that recovery takes a lifetime. His facility has now expanded its reach to outpatients. He is the author of over 60 books on the intersection of spirituality and recovery. The 12 Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous outlines a path forward for one experiencing addiction. Rabbi Twerski asserts that the founder of A.A., Bill Wilson, must have plagiarized the works of *mussar* ...and that for both A.A. and Jewish spirituality there is no dichotomy of sacred versus secular.

The steps of A.A. are a primary example of how to take chaos, addiction, which subsumes all logic, and break it down with a procedure resulting in transformation. The steps of A.A. are "intended to help us make the changes necessary so that we can rid our lives of addiction and discover the inherent treasure already within us. They primarily involve deep

reflection, uncompromising honesty, and willingness to learn and take direction from another. They are guideposts toward positive change" (P. Steinberg, 100). While he has primarily focused on addiction, Twerski's use of *mussar*, a values system that seeks to maximize a person's spiritual happiness and functioning, is for anyone seeking wholeness, experiencing suffering, or simply trying to find meaning in existence. Very important has been his identity as a Chassidic rabbi speaking, writing, and raising awareness that the Jewish community is not only not immune to brokenness and shame but allows moral injury to flourish when these issues are not spoken about openly. One of his books, for example, *The Shame Borne in Silence: Spouse Abuse in the Jewish Community* works to erase the myth that Jews do not abuse their spouses. He tirelessly works to directly address problems deep within the Jewish community so that the community no longer permits itself to deny their existence , but rather confronts the truth.

Rabbi James Stone Goodman in St. Louis, MO:

Rabbi James Stone Goodman believes that the root of brokenness is shame. Unsurprisingly, he has a special interest in Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism which has informed his rabbinate and his initiation of two different weekly programs to reduce shame and promote wholeness. The first group, Shande* (Yiddish for shame) says their mission states their goals explicitly, "By telling the stories of our successes and our losses, we intend to reduce the shande-shame factor. It begins with talk; talk about difficult subjects we may not be accustomed to airing out in community. We are creating a safe space for such conversations. We also feel it's important to make connections with others in our community doing the good work so to speak so

our efforts are not isolated. We are struggling against isolation in all quarters: personal and communal. The point is not to practice aloneness" (No Shonda Preamble, unpublished). This group is to support those living with and around mental health problems..

Goodman's other program, "Shalvah," (serenity) is a support group to help individuals, their families, friends and communities work through their problems associated with addiction. Shalvah "teaches an integrated approach, combining spiritual and psychological resources, acting as a bridge between the recovery model and the daily spiritual remedies of Judaism and other traditions" (ibid). The meeting connects traditional spiritual resources with the 12 step model and to celebrate recovery. Just as A.A. meetings adopted the serenity prayer which begins and concludes every meeting, so too does Shalvah format their meetings in the same way. The simple words of this prayer emphasize seeking peace, strength, and wisdom, and can give individuals the courage to reach inward and outward to face another situation, and another step, and another day.

Beit T'shuvah and Rabbi James Goodman's "No Shonda" and "Shalvah" support groups integrate Judaism and 12 Steps. The 12 steps of A.A., "comprise spiritual principles transmitted through loving and tireless sponsors who themselves have had the power to crawl out of the disease's incomprehensible demoralization. And they were only able to do so because of the grace of the sponsor who had earlier refused to disregard them as invisible, a lost cause, or a pariah. The spiritual lessons of individual and communal experience, hope, and strength found in both Judaism and A.A. save countless lives, as they are passed on from one person to the next… and see that Judaism through its values and practices, can serve as a spiritual remedy to alcoholism, as well as enrich and expand A.A. principles, adding more depth, more meaning, and

more tools for recovery" (Steinberg, 172). The image of purity only stemming from impurity, or wholeness only stemming from brokenness is reflected in the progression of the final steps of A.A.. Steps 1-4 are an acknowledgement of an individual's own powerlessness and the need to forge a pathway forward by finding a higher power greater than oneself. Steps 5-7 are a process of turning one's heart first inward, admitting the nature of one's wrongdoing, and then turning outward to God and to others with honesty, for "if we turn with open hearts to the Holy One, God is forever ready to embrace us with love." Having first looked inward and finding love and acceptance within oneself and the gifts of imperfection, the groundwork is laid to look outward.

The impact of Rabbi Goodman not only bringing conversations and open sharing surrounding mental health, brokenness, and addiction to his community, but using these principles as the central tenants in forming Jewish community, cannot be overstated and should be emulated in order to create communities where the roots of shame and blame are ripped out from their depths. Like Beit T'shuvah, "Jimmy," as Rabbi Goodman is affectionately known in his groups, emphasizes love and belonging as core to his mission and a whole-hearted acceptance of self and others in the formation of community. In Brene Brown's book, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Brown distinguishes between "fitting in" and "belonging." Fitting in almost always requires denying or silencing parts of yourself. Belonging welcomes all of you" (Brown, 108). Community is an essential component of wholeness because it provides a layer of acceptance that cannot be replicated. Religious community, especially its leaders, takes on the additional role of representing God. Beit T'Shuvah identifies integrated care in a community setting as the key to healing broken souls and saving the lives of those wrestling with addiction. Rabbi Steinberg, a recovering addict himself, remarks on his negative experiences within

synagogue life. “The synagogue becomes a community of covering up one’s brokenness and imperfection, ‘looking good’ for one another and for the rabbi instead of the rabbi leading the way to dealing with life’s struggles and growing together. This charade prevents true connection with one another, with the rabbi, and with the Divine” (Steinberg, 5). Rabbi Goodman’s work speaking about recovery, relapse, and mental health by using Torah, Jewish spirituality, prayer, and lament is a beautiful model for clergy and their communities for in seeing Jewish concepts within the 12 Steps model, it is clear that one does not have to be an addict to be in recovery. For, “The nashama is perennially in a state of *teshuvah* in that it is never apart from its source. We just have to tune in to its call.” (E Frankel, 126).

The Champions Stoddard and Burns-Hanely Spiritual Assessment Model

A spiritual assessment model can help chaplains and clergy develop a treatment plan for a congregant to assess their spiritual health. The Champions Stoddard and Burns-Hanely Spiritual Assessment Model emerges from the “whole-person healthcare” model. Historically, the focus of medical care has been an almost exclusive focus on the physiological aspects of care. A whole-person model involves all aspects of a patient’s life including the biological, psychosocial, social, and spiritual domains. This assessment model involves four components: the individual’s Concept of God, the Meaning of their Illness, Support System, and their Quality of Hope. These elements are parallel to the threefold levels of *mitzvot*. S.Y Agnon said “A person has three beings. The first being is the way in which a person perceives himself, the second is the way in which a person is seen by others, and the third being is prior to the first, and it is the being by which he was created by Him who created him” (E. Frankel). These three levels are linked with

one another and are reflective of a whole being. The greatest of these three relationships, though, affirms that wholeness is inwardly driven and affirmed by an outside spiritual force. When an individual is able to see themselves as God intended, as an imperfect yet holy being, that is when wholeness begins to emerge. By working on developing one level, it enforces another, and creates a whole, connected being.

This model maintains that assessing an individual's relationship with and concept of God (*bein adam l'Makom*) and their understanding of their illness are two of the four factors in assessing an individual's spirituality, resulting in a diagnosis and treatment plan. They define spirituality as "the dimension of life that reflects the need to find meaning in existence and in which we respond to the sacred...the person's ultimate meaning and values in life." (Mt. Carmel, 1989). The Champions Stoddard and Burns-Hanely spiritual assessment model identifies having a "support system" as integral to an individual's healing journey. Having supportive relationship with others (*bein adam l'chavero*) through the form of love and acceptance for an individual's story from friends, family, peers and religious institutions, is essential in the holistic wholeness journey. The last category of the Champions Stoddard and Burns-Hanely spiritual assessment model is the chaplain's assessment of the Quality of Hope. Assessing an individual's Quality of Hope involves connecting the individual both to the present moment and their desires for the future. It also involves determining where the individual draws strength when they are struggling. This strength can come from God, from others, and it can come from within (*bein adam l'atzmo*) the desire to find wholeness within their inner self and meaning for their life.

An assessment tool such as Champions Stoddard and Burns-Hanely helps to outline a prognosis and provides a pathway forward for an individual's journey from brokenness to

wholeness. In clarifying that wholeness is not about perfection and that brokenness is associated with a loss of purpose, emptiness, and feelings of shame, *shleimut* becomes more about feelings of fullness and embracing imperfections within oneself and others and being able to live in a place of worthiness and vulnerability. Before outlining pathways to wholeness, understanding the levels of this work will help pave the way forward.

The Union for Reform Judaism and Caring Communities

It is important to look beyond specific congregations and leaders to see how and if Jewish national organizations believe that paving a pathway from brokenness to wholeness is essential to the work of synagogue life. In the 1970s the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), "acknowledged that due to racism, ableism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression, our communities are not whole until everyone experiences a sense of belonging within the Jewish community" (URJ, accessed Dec 2020). This is a mission statement acknowledging the brokenness within the current structure of Jewish synagogues. This recognition sparked the Sacred Caring Community led by Rabbi Edythe Held Mencher. Rabbi Mencher has written a number of articles (posted on the Movement's website) about suffering, loneliness, and isolation within the Jewish community as a consequence of mental illness. A sample of her writings includes "So That No One Suffers Alone: There's Much the Jewish Community Can Do to Render Depression Visible and Eliminate Its Stigma" (2013), "How We Can Embrace Those Struggling with Severe Depression" (2016), "T'shuvah Can Heal Our Hearts, Even When We Can't Totally Forgive" (2013) and beyond. Putting these concepts into writing serves as a helpful

resource for congregations and individuals to provide the vital ingredient of language. These articles can provide a prompt or serve as the basis for programming through which to engage in deep and meaningful conversation. In navigating the URJ website though, it is challenging to find specific initiatives and programs designed for synagogues to erase shame and blame and promote open dialogue and acceptance. Rabbi Mencher has another resource, "Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center," as part of a partnership with the URJ, some of which resources focus on mental health and training for congregations. However, it is unclear what the mission is—specifically who is using these resources and to what degree? There are exemplar congregations listed as engaging in this work, but this needs to be expanded to include every congregation so that there is continual education for clergy, staff, and synagogue leadership on this topic.

In the evolution of its *siddurim*, prayer books, liberal Jewish communities have in a number of ways recognized the need for everyone, without exception, to receive the greatest blessing of *shleimut*. One such example is in the *Birkat Kohanim*. Because of its hierarchical nature, giving a higher status to some individuals (men), over others, simply based on their gender and genealogy, the practices around its execution, and its language have shifted in some communities. The ritual of Birkat Kohanim has been adapted to include the entire community, or to bless an honored individual. In these communities there are no exclusions on who can give or receive the blessing of peace. As described in the Reconstructionist *siddur*, "Another way to enact the Priestly Blessing is for each congregant to turn to a neighbor and recite the first half of each blessing, while the neighbor responds with the second half of the blessing...Rabbi Lavy Becker of Montreal modified that custom so that those wearing a tallit share it with their

neighbors and all are under the sheltering wings of the *Shehinah a*s we bless each other" (*Kol Haneshamah,* 199). This is a beautiful way of using liturgy to create a sacred community where all are embraced and blessed.

This creativity and effort to expand various liturgical practices reflects the evolution of embracing *shleimut* for each member of a community, but more work needs to be done. "The willingness to tell our stories, feel the pain of others, and stay genuinely connected in this disconnected world is not something we can do half heartedly" (Brown, 21). Brokenness is a human experience that every individual and community will experience. The roots of brokenness might be different, but the "hole in the soul" feeling is the same. Jewish community needs to emulate God's love of all, within the walls of the synagogue and beyond. A common thread for addicts is that they do not feel loved or understood, and they might even have had a traumatic experience with a faith community. Just as destructive behaviors such as addiction and violences towards the self and others can be a result of a negative experience with religion, so too is seeing oneself within a religious tradition an important part of recovery. "Love belongs with belonging—a deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all women, men, and children...Belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us. Because this yearning is so primal, we often try to acquire it by fitting in and by seeking approval, which are not only hollow substitutes for belonging, but often barriers to it" (Brown, 26). Brown makes the distinction between fitting in and belonging saying, "Belonging doesn't require us to change who we are, it requires us to be who we are" (ibid).

Further areas for exploration and concluding thoughts

The topic of wholeness and brokenness in Judaism is a well-researched field. There are many more sources that could have been included in this thesis including, but certainly not limited to: Rabbi Eli Kaplan Spitz's *Healing from Despair: Choosing Wholeness in a Broken World* (2012), Rabbi Karyn Kedar's *The Bridge to Forgiveness: Stories and Prayers for Finding God and Restoring Wholeness* (2007), and Rabbi Kerry Olitzky's *Jewish Paths toward Healing and Wholeness: A Personal Guide to Dealing With Suffering*. Rabbi Olitzky also wrote *Twelve Jewish Steps to Recovery: A Personal Guide to Turning From Alcoholism and Other Addictions—Drugs, Food, Gambling, Sex* (2012) and has viewed the topic of wholeness through the lens of addiction and recovery alongside Rabbi Abraham Twerski and Rabbi Mark Borovitz, both of whom have numerous books on this topic. The reason the research on this topic is so vast is because, "One can never exhaust the facets of peace and their promise; reflection on what peace might bring is a joyful enterprise even when peace itself stubbornly defies realization" (Lewis, 300).

This thesis is to be added to the already existing literature and efforts to understand the Jewish roots of *shevira*, the counterpart to *shleimut*. In viewing the first story in the Torah, the story of Creation as a model for human relationships, it becomes clear that a loss of purpose and shame is at the center of brokenness and causes a fracturing of relationships. Therefore, wholeness happens on multiple planes requiring healing *bein adam l'Makom*, *bein adam l'chavero*, and *bein adam l'atzmo*. Each is essential to creating a whole person. The question emerges then: what are the tools to find wholeness and peace in all facets of life and

relationships? Understanding that brokenness stems from chaos, it becomes clear that lament is actually the first step to restoring wholeness because it opens an individual to first feel, and then express, the full range of their emotions.

Suffering and brokenness have existed since the beginning of time. However, moments of *shleimut* are possible, and these programs, initiatives, and communities are forging a path forward. It is in the hope for peace within the cycle of brokenness that wholeness will emerge. "To give up the collective dream of peace would be to compound the tragedy of today. In a time of intractable conflict, violence and war, studying peace becomes desperately needed so that children and their parents will not settle for a lesser world" (Lewis, 338). The journey to wholeness never ends as can be seen in the cyclical nature of the Jewish calendar and the continual repetition of the 12 steps; it is the continual ascent towards the Divine nature of one's being. The prayer *Un'taneh Tokef* urges the pray-er to engage in *t'shuvah*, *t'filah*, and *tzedakah* as a way of coping with the difficulties of life. Surprisingly (but perhaps not), it is within the opposition of fire and water that *shalom* exists.

Another example of holding opposites concurrently is described in a legend following Moses shattering the tablets after seeing the Israelites worshiping the idol they had created. Following the shattering, "According to legend, the Israelites proceeded to gather up the broken pieces [of the tablets]. Realizing their mistake and what they had lost, they collected the fragmented remains of their mystical vision, and they began to mourn their loss and repent their folly….On what was to become the first Yom Kippur, or Day of Atonement, the Israelites were given a second set of tablets and a second chance...the Israelites carried the two sets of tablets—the broken and the whole—around with them in an ark for the rest of their desert

journey. Both sets of tablets were taken into the Promised Land, say the rabbis, where they were kept side by side until they were eventually placed in the holy Temple in Jerusalem" (E. Frankel, 41). This story teaches that mistakes and even failures are a natural, inevitable part of development. It was only after Israel's mistake of worshipping the golden calf that they were able to receive Torah. It also teaches that each individual was part of picking up the broken pieces. Similarly, it is imperative that synagogues and communities acknowledge that Jewish spaces are broken, and that too many of their members feel they have to hide themselves away from their clergy and their communities. Mistakes will be made along the way, but the tools of *t'filah, tzedakah*, and *teshuvah* are the greatest means available for deep healing.

Shleimut has often been translated as "perfection." However, this research has shown that perfection does not exist, and that the seeking of it actually leads to further harm. This thesis is not the end of the search for answers. Rather as Ernest Kurtz says in *The Spirituality of Imperfection*, "by the end of this journey, the jarring notes, spatial dissonances, and cultural cacophonous will blend together into a sort of symphony, a chorus of separate, distinct, and sometimes off-key voices harmonizing into a whole...not perfect harmony, but harmony nonetheless." (Kurtz). May God, the Maker of peace, bless the Jewish community, all peoples, and all who dwell on earth, and grant the greatest gift of *shalom*, of peace and wholeness.

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