

And You Shall Be Holy
Made in the Image of God

Study Session
June 2005

KOACH
on campus



The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Contents

1) Copy Ready Text Sheets

2) Facilitator Guide

The following materials have been created by KOACH for the enhancement of your on-campus programming. They are designed to be adjustable based on your interests and the available time. This packet contains: a copy ready text sheet, background materials and a facilitator guide. The background materials and facilitator guide will help you build conversations around the text and create connections between the text and contemporary life.

Questions? Send them to: estrin@uscj.org.

And You Shall Be Holy

Vayikra 19:1-2

And the Lord spoke to Moshe saying,
Speak to all the congregation of the children
of Yisra'el, and say to them, You shall be holy:
for I the Lord your God am holy.

רצו: רצו ודאקט ופאר צו
טשעק ירש"ה א, צו קט
והש"ש ו
:צו ופאר ה' יס' ה'

B'reishit 1:27

And God created the man in His image,
in the image of God(s) he created him,
male and female he created them.

אדם בראשיתו, ויהי תב
:אדם בראשיתו, ויהי תב

Pirkei Avot 3:14

[Rabbi Akiva] used to say: Man is
beloved, for we were created in [God's]
image. Still greater was the love shown us
when he made known to us that we were
created in [God's] image as it is written
(B'reishit 9:6), In the image of God(s)
He made the human.

תב אדם בראשיתו, ויהי תב
תב אדם בראשיתו, ויהי תב
אדם בראשיתו, ויהי תב
אדם בראשיתו, ויהי תב



And You Shall Be Holy

Facilitator Guide

Getting Started

You might open your conversation by asking the students what they think about the concept of being holy. Does it mean physically, morally, spiritually? Are there responsibilities that come with being holy?

Section One – Vayikra, B'reishit & Pirkei Avot

As a large group, read through and discuss the quote from Vayikra. What does it mean that we are holy because God is holy? How does that work? Use this as a bridge to the concept that perhaps we are holy (in whole or in part) because we are made in the image of God or, when we are God-like in our lives.

Have the students work in hevruta (pairs) or small groups to read and discuss the B'reishit and Pirkei Avot texts. What does it mean that we were created in God's image? Why, according to Rabbi Akiva, does it make man beloved? What difference does it make that we know we were created in God's image?

Return to the large group and discuss. What do they make out of these two pieces of text? Why is it important that we are made in God's image?

Notes on B'reishit 1:24 – you might want to discuss that betzelem elohim (in the image of Gods) is plural (the angels as well?) as well as noticing that both bara oto (he created him) and bara otam (he created them) are used. One Midrash states that God first created Adam (the first human; earthling) with the characteristics of both men and women, bara oto, and then later split Adam in two two halves – man and woman, bara otam.

Notes on Pirkei Avot – The partial quote, from B'reishit 9:6, is in the context of God's commands to Noah after the flood.

Section Two – Birkhot HaShahar

Have the students return to hevruta or small groups to read and discuss these brakhot. What does each of them mean? Are they to be read literally or can one read them figuratively as well? What might they mean in a figurative sense?

Return to the large group and discuss. What does it mean that God has done these things? How can these be read figuratively?

Introduce and discuss the idea that these are things we are recognizing that God does for us but most of them are also things that we can do for others. What are concrete and abstract ways that we can, in the image of God, perform each of these tasks? (Give sight to the blind: literal - raise a guide dog, raise money for braille books; figurative - help someone see something about themselves, the world, etc. that they have been unable to see, help someone understand a difficult concept. Restores vigor: literal - provide food; figurative - help someone through a hard time). How does performing these tasks make us more God-like?

Concluding Discussion

Below are some possible questions to wrap things up.

- If we are made in God's image what does that imply about how we should treat ourselves and others? How do we put that into action?
- What if someone is not "perfect"? Is that still in God's image?
- If this series of morning brahot are guidelines for how we can act more like God, how can they be incorporated into college life?

Divre Sha'are Chaim- read the quote together & discuss the added difficulty of being 'made in the image of God' in public.