Olam Hesed Yibaneh
The world is made of love

I will build this world from love,
And you must build this world from love
And if we build this world from love,
Then G!d will build this world from love

(Music and English Lyrics by Rabbi Menachem Creditor)
Psalms 89:3
(3) I declare, “The world is made of love; there in the heavens You establish Your faithfulness.”

Avot of Rabbi Natan 2:43

The world was created with ten forces: wisdom and knowledge, understanding, strength, rebuke and judgment. Through process and creativity, love and compassion.

How do we learn that the world was created with hesed?
As it is written: “The world is built from love (hesed)” (Psalm 89:3)

How do we learn that the world was created with compassion?
As it is written: “I will gather you in with great compassion” (Isaiah 54:7)
Martin Luther King, “The Death of Evil Upon the Seashore” (1955)

“We all have experiences when the light of day goes out and we are left standing in some dark and desolate midnight—moments when our noblest dreams are shattered and our highest hopes are blasted; moments when we are the victims of some tragic injustice and some terrible exploitation. During these moments our spirits are almost eaten away by gloom and despair; we feel that there is no light anywhere. But ever and again, when these moments come, we find ourselves taking the eastward look, only to discover that there is another light which shines even in the darkness. This would be a miserable, terrible and unbearable world if God had only one light. But we can be consoled by the fact that God has two lights—a light to guide us in the brightness of the day when hopes are fulfilled and circumstances are favorable and a light to guide us in the darkness of the midnight when frustrations are real and the slumbering giants of gloom and hopelessness are on the verge of rising up in our souls. Therefore we never need walk in darkness.”

First Day of Rosh Hashanah

Sotah 14a
Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says:
What is the meaning of the verse:
“You shall follow the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 13:5)?

How is it actually possible for a person to follow the Divine Presence? Doesn’t it say: “For the Lord your God is a devouring fire” (Deuteronomy 4:24)? (He explains) Rather, the meaning is that one should follow the characteristics of the holy, blessed One.

Just as God clothes the naked, as it is written: “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21), so too, should you clothe the naked.

Just as the Holy One, visits the sick, as it is written (with regard to God’s appearing to Abraham following his circumcision) “And the Lord appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre” (Genesis 18:1), so too, should you visit the sick.

Just as the Holy One, consoles mourners, as it is written: “And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son” (Genesis 25:11), so too, should you console mourners.

Just as the Holy One, buried the dead, as it is written (regarding Moses): “And he was buried in the valley in the land of Moab” (Deuteronomy 34:6), so too, should you bury the dead.

Sotah 14a
Rabbi Samlai taught:
The Torah begins with an act of kindness and ends with an act of kindness.

It begins with an act of kindness, as it is written: “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). And it ends with an act of kindness, as it is written: “And he was buried in the valley in the land of Moab” (Deuteronomy 34:6).
“Gemilut is the word that turns individual acts of chesed into an entire network. It derives from the same Hebrew word as the phrase yachas gomlim, meaning a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity. Gemilut is the activity of mutuality and reciprocity. Gemilut is the activity that creates the I-Thou relationship that Martin Buber describes. You sustain me and I sustain you. Or: you act toward me in chesed, I do the same to the next person I meet, and it will come around to you again. In this way gemilut chasadim is woven throughout the fabric of society. Such a vision helps us understand why the rabbis saw gemilut chasadim as one of the three pillars of existence."

Second Day of Rosh Hashanah

Talmud Bavli, Tractate of Berakhot 5b

“Rabbi Eleazar was ill, suffering from deep despair, so his friend, Rabbi Yochanan, went to visit him. He found Eleazar alone in a dark room, facing the wall. Yochanan saw his friend crying and asked, “Why do you weep?” Eleazar answered, “I weep because all light fades into darkness, because all beauty eventually rots.” Yochanan sat down beside his friend and replied, “Yes, Eleazar, ultimately everything does die. Perhaps you have reason to weep.” And so Yochanan and Eleazar wept together. After a while Yochanan gently asked, “Does darkness comfort you? Do you want these sufferings?” “No,” Eleazar replied. Yochanan extended his hand and Eleazar grasped hold of it. He felt light and life touch him. Yochanan raised him out of bed and helped him to the door.”

Building this World from LOVE

Hesed

“It’s amazing how deeply connected you can become to someone in only 20 minutes each month!” - A member of our Hesed team

Hesed at TBZ happens in many different ways.

First and foremost, if you are ill or in need of support via meals, transportation or errands, know that your community is here with you. Please contact hesed@tbzbrookline.org or call us at 617-566-8171. Please notify Rav Claudia directly if you need to talk about or be listened to with regard to your situation.

Inclusion

If you would like to be involved in our inclusion efforts at TBZ, please connect with our Inclusion committee via e-mail: inclusion@tbzbrookline.org

If you would like to support these or other efforts of building a community of Hesed, at TBZ with your time or other talents please email the Hesed or the Inclusion committee at the addresses above.

Other opportunities to be involved in the work of building this world from love are:

Tikkun Olam

Through our Tikkun Olam work. Email tikkunolam@tbzbrookline.org for more information.

The Literacy project partners with a school in Brighton to foster a love of reading early. Email literacytutors@tbzbrookline.org for more information.

Bringing crackers and canned vegetarian soups when you come to TBZ for Family Table at Jewish Family Children & Services.

An opportunity to learn together:

OLAM HESED YIBANEH:
BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF HESED WITH RAV CLAUDIA
Mondays, January 6, 20, 27 and Feb 3

(please note slight change of dates from what was announced previously)

We know that we are supposed to care for the sick and comfort mourners, and many other acts of chesed, loving-kindness, but how do we do this in a Jewish way? Together we’ll learn the textual sources and grapple with these mitzvot in our own lives and as we build community at TBZ.
Sanctuary
May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart
Be acceptable to you Yah,
My Rock and My Redeemer.
Oh Lord prepare me
to be a Sanctuary
Pure and holy, tried and true
And with thanksgiving, I’ll be a living Sanctuary for You.

Ve-asu li mikdash
Ve-shachanti be-tocham
Ve-a-nach-nu ne-var-ech Yah,
May-atah ve-ad o-lam