

The Dee

Pirkei Avot Project

הֵלֵל וְשַׁמַּי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֵם. הֵלֵל אָמַר, הָיוּ מִתְלַמְּדֵי שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן,
אוֹהֵב שְׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שְׁלוֹם, אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת וּמְקַרְבֵּן לַתּוֹרָה:

Hillel and Shammai received [the oral tradition] from them. Hillel used to say: be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and drawing them close to the Torah.

What exactly is the Mishna trying to tell us about Aharon? And what makes his students so special?

The commentators have a range of different views on this, describing Aharon's '*darchei shalom*' (ways of peace) in surprising ways.

Rabbi Ovadya of Bartanura describes Aharon's ways like this: Whenever Aharon saw two people fighting, he'd go to each one separately and tell them that the other one was full of regret and longs for forgiveness. As such, Aharon would bring peace.

The Rambam says that Aharon, being a lover and pursuer of peace, would befriend everyone, especially those who had done wrong in the past, and treat them with kindness and love.

These people would be shocked, and say to themselves "If Aharon knew what I've done, he'd never want to be around me. I did such bad things." This would lead them to return to the path of good and be drawn to the Torah (as described at the end of the mishna).

Tosfot Yom Tov finds a problem with this idea. Doesn't Aharon connecting to wrongdoers contradict Nitai Ha-Arbeli's teaching in Avot 1:7: '*v'al titchaber larasha*' ("do not become attached to the wicked")? Tosfot Yom Tov then explains why, actually, there is no contradiction. Aharon didn't really connect to the wicked, he simply influenced them; this influence on others is something that we should emulate.

We can also easily find this influence and love of peace and Torah, in Lucy, Maia, and Rina's ways. All three of them were such good people, doing so much good in the world, never ceasing to help their friends with conflicts or hardships, seek peace and good everywhere and learn and share Torah.

Discussion Points:

What are you especially good at? How would you like to share it with others?
In what way do you want the world to advance, and how can you put effort into making that happen?

What can you do, no matter how small, that can add some good, some love, some peace and Torah to the world of people in your sphere of influence?

לעילוי נשמת:

לאה בת רפאל הכהן וציפורה
מאיה אסתר בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה
רינה מרים בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה

Idea by Tsofiya Novick, fifteen, friend of Rina Dee

