

"A VOICE INSIDE ALL OF US" STUDY COMPANION

Encouraging thoughtful dialogue in times of community conflict

We live in a time where our communication with those who think and feel differently from ourselves is stunted. Peace does not come from ignoring our divergent viewpoints, but rather through cultivating rich relationships that seek honest engagement around our variances.

OK! LET'S DEBRIEF...

This film is a hyperbole of what is happening in our country right now. Negativity breeds more negativity. We feel isolated from those who disagree with us. Yet, peace, understanding, and faith in our collective humanity is possible.

- *What was the presenting "problem" in the film?*
- *Did you identify/connect with the "problem"?*
- *How did Brenda find her voice?*
- *Why was her voice so attractive to others?*
- *What reaction did she produce in those who received her critique?*
- *What was the role/responsibility of the Rabbi? Did she succeed?*
- *What does it mean to be voiceless in our current climate?*

WHAT MAKES A "GOOD PERSON"

We are all good people. However, we each respond to injustice in our own way. Sometimes, we dismiss the power of our own voice, wondering, "Who am I to say anything?" and "What can I really change?" Or, alternatively, sometimes our righteousness is undermined by self-righteous behavior.

TEXT STUDY: Talmud, Shabbat 54b

"If one can protest the misdeeds of his or her household, yet does not, the person becomes guilty with them. If a person can protest the misdeeds of one's townspeople and does not, the person is guilty of them. If one can protest the misdeeds of the entire world and does not, the person is guilty of them."

- *When is it our duty to speak up?*
- *How does this text reflect the current political climate?*
- *Where is your voice (and how do you express it) in the face of injustice?*

BUT I WILL NEVER AGREE WITH "THEM"

Let's face it, unless we are living in complete thought silos, there are people all around us with whom we disagree. It is easy to "other" them and think that we are right and they are wrong. However, peace is not the absence of discord and wholeness does not mean uniformity or conformity. There is beauty to be found in conflict.

TEXT STUDY from Rabbi Joseph Albo Book of Principles, Vol.4, part 2, ch.51, p.493

"Harmony (agreement) between opposites is called shalom (peace)... (for) there is virtue in opposing qualities. This results when both sides have the power to predominate over the other. This is the cause of permanence and peace. Hence the Bible says: "The Lord will give strength to God's people; the Lord will bless God's people with peace (Ps. 29:11). The Psalmist is praying that God should give God's people strength, but not so much strength to enable one to prevail over the other and destroy them, which would be the cause of quarrel and strife. He prays that God should give them strength in order to bless God's people with peace, i.e. that there should be agreement between them, that one of the sides should not predominate over the other in order to destroy virtue and produce vice. Such agreement is called peace. "

- *What is true peace (Shalom)?*
- *Is Shalom achievable?*

THE OPPORTUNITY OF OUR TIME

Our role as people of faith is not to accept injustice as part of a Divine plan. Rather, it is our role to remind God of the value of humanity and to remind ourselves that God is contained in every living being. Each of us has a righteous voice. We inherited our voice from the many generations before us. They endured through troubled times so that we could be here in this moment, during these dark times, carrying the torch of change and justice, that will light and unite this world for the generations to come.

- What is happening in our world that gives you hope?
- Who are your allies in these turbulent times?
- Who have you been blind to because you do not understand or agree with their opinions and/or actions?
- Where is your voice?

Temple Shalom thanks you for watching our film "A Voice Inside All of Us" and engaging in study. It is our goal to inspire conversation and pursue peace in all its variegated and dynamic ways.